

AUTUMN TERM 2024

MINUTES of the meeting of the Governors of Chalfont St Giles Village School held at the school on 28 November 2024 at 7 pm

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

		ACTION
1	NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS There were no items of 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 3 October 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	Declarations of Interest and KCSiE confirmation on GHub (minutes 3, 8.2.1) These had been completed.	
3.2.2	Collaboration with Iver Village Juniors (minute 5.1) The Iver Village Junior GB had met recently but the outcome was not yet known.	Clerk
3.2.3	Committee Terms of Reference (minute 5.2) Amendments were recommended to the Communications Committee. All terms of reference were adopted and the Clerk would post these on Governor	Clerk

	ACTION
Hub.	
3.2.4 Communication to parents regarding attendance (minute 6.1 Q18) This was ongoing.	Headteacher
3.2.5 Governor involvement in new assessment tool and GB target in SDP (minute 6.3) SLT had a demonstration of Insight which would be followed by a 60 day trial. A demonstration of Sonar had been arranged, potentially also with a 60 day trial. The intention was to show the potential systems in the January Data Meeting. The GB SDP target would be followed up.	Headteacher Headteacher
3.2.6 Equality Policy and Targets (minute 9.1) <i>See item 7.5.</i>	
3.2.7 Privacy Notices (minute 9.2) Work had been done to update these and final tweaks remained.	Headteacher
3.2.8 Attendance Policy (minute 9.6) This had been agreed at Curriculum and Standards Committee subject to minor amendments.	
3.2.9 INSET dates for 2025-26 (minute 9.8) The LA specified date would be Wednesday 3 September 2025. The school specific dates would be Thursday 4 September, Monday 3 November 2025, Monday 5 January and Monday 1 June 2025.	
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	
4.1 Headteacher's report	
Governors noted the report of the Headteacher and related documents which had been circulated in advance. Questions were invited.	
<i>What is Insight and what is the cost?</i>	
<i>A tracking tool is sought to replace Target Tracker. Insight is a data tracking tool which will show progress and achievement from the assessment data. The cost would be £4.50 per pupil or around £2,000 for both sites. It also analyses attendance data with patterns of absence and comparisons against other periods of time. Reports are easy to run.</i>	
<i>Insight also includes functionality similar to Provision Map so it could be a possibility or could allow the school to scale back on Provision Map, although it would mean a lot of work would have to be redone.</i>	
<i>Could Provision Map be used to populate Insight?</i>	
<i>Perhaps some of the data could be transferred, but they are structured differently so this may not be possible.</i>	
<i>See Part 2 Confidential Minutes</i>	

Did the LA headline visit raise any issues that SLT was unaware of?

No but some of the questions came from a different viewpoint and so were useful. An example was about reviewing the Phonics scheme as success had declined. Roz Burch would visit the Juniors in April or May. (See also item 8.)

4.2 School Development Plan (SDP) / Self Evaluation Form (SEF)

Staff were working through the actions in the SDP.

The percentage attendance was a little low but was skewed by a few absences. Attendance figures had been on each target sheet and discussed in Parents' Evenings. *See Part 2 Confidential Minutes*

Governors noted the SEF assessments which were based on Ofsted grades.

5 GOVERNING BOARD

Gill Brown was reappointed as Associate Member and a member of Curriculum and Standards Committee.

The contact from Governors for Schools had responded to the Chair after some months and remained interested in becoming a Governor. The vacancy had, however, been filled in the interim.

6 COMMITTEE MINUTES**6.1 COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Minutes of the Communications Committee meeting held on 24 October 2024, having been circulated, were noted.

6.1.1 GDPR related

There had been no FOI or SAR requests or data breaches.

6.1.2 End of Year Parent Survey

The findings had been helpful in selecting the questions for the Parents' Evening survey.

6.1.3 Website audit

The website had been reviewed and some comments had been addressed. Recently approved policies were yet to be uploaded.

6.1.4 Policies

Governors noted that the Complaints Procedure had been updated. The GDPR Policies would be updated for consideration at the next meeting.

6.1.5 Parent Evening Survey results

Three questions chosen from the end of year survey had been used. The response was higher than at the end of the year with 236 responses from the

300 families in the school. Governors welcomed the response and the findings.

On 'the school lets me know how I am doing', there were comments asking for more regular feedback. Parents' Evening was a one off discussion but comments were that it was difficult to talk to teachers at drop off and pick up. From teachers' point of view, these were not opportunities to discuss pupils and they made only short general comments about the day.

Was there anything in the new Tracker that would enable more frequent feedback?

The systems would show whether a pupil was on track but would give nothing of the detail presented at Parents' Evening. That level of written information takes a lot of teachers' time and could not be done more often.

The underlying issue seemed to be that parents were not sure if a child is progressing as they should and looked for reassurance and information on how best they could support their children. Although there was some form of information every term, parents could find it difficult to accept that no news was good news.

Parents did receive something along those lines at Parents' Evening but some tweaking might make the end of year report more explicit about the next year's target. This would be tried out with Class Reps to look at how useful parents might find it.

Another question that emerged was whether homework could be provided on paper rather than on line. There were concerns about using screens too much but it was probably linked to parents wish to offer help and support.

The third area of comments was around Clubs and activities. The positives had increased from Summer but there was a question around Years 3 and 4.

How many parents attend Parents' Evening?

The attendance is very high. Only one or two parents per class were chased to ensure they attend.

6.2 CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Curriculum and Standards Committee meeting held on 12 November 2024, having been circulated, were noted. The Committee had a presentation on the teaching of Maths, discussed attendance and reviewed policies.

At the next meeting, they would discuss school uniform, particularly whether ties should be worn. Junior School pupils would be asked for their views. The next Data Meeting would have an opportunity to look at potential tracker systems.

6.3 FINANCE COMMITTEE

Headteacher

Deputy
Headteacher

The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 19 November 2024, having been circulated, were noted and the Committee Chair had sent round a note to outline the financial situation.

The headlines were that there had been a significant negative shift for both schools but particularly for the Junior School. The main reason was the cost of support for SEN children because LA funding arrangements had changed. When a child has an EHCP, the school pays the first 13.5 hours per week of support costs. The cost of support whilst collecting evidence for an EHCP application and whilst the LA is considering the bid used to be supported by the HNBF from the LA. HNBF is no longer available. The LA is required to agree an EHCP within 20 weeks but is currently taking 40 weeks. The school funds the interim support and EHCP funding is not backdated.

The majority of the negative variance was due to carrying the cost of SEN support. In addition, an error in the budget submitted to the LA had slipped Committee oversight in the gap between Business Managers.

In this situation, the LA has asked that the school puts forward a plan to have a balanced budget by the end of 2026-27, the three year plan period, based on current levels of funding. The school is required to apply to the LA for a Licensed Deficit Agreement which would give permission to run with a deficit. The Finance Committee was meeting again to draw up a credible plan by mid December. The LA focus was on finance rather than education and the Committee's intention was to find an appropriate balance.

Savings would be found wherever possible on supplies and contracts. Whilst this could not address the whole sum, it would make a good contribution. Trips would also be reviewed as the school had made contributions from the Budget. Additional requests for funding would be made to parents if a trip was in danger of cancellation and, although PP funding was used where appropriate, requests could be made for voluntary contributions to the cost of board and lodging.

Will there be any change in the number of SEN pupils?

Currently seven pupils are on the pathway to an application for an EHCP and five more are in application stage. Support is being provided and the cost would be in the region of £100,000. Some SEN pupils would leave Year 6 in Summer. There were spaces in Year 2 so more pupils could join at Year 3 in Summer. A good number of parents had looked round the school for places next September and had been positive. Some of that number were parents of SEN children who had heard good things about the school's SEN provision. Governors noted that the LA could direct a school to take a pupil with SEN.

Is the timing of the EHCP approval process a legal requirement? What is the point of the requirement if it is not enforced?

Yes but the LA does not take account of that requirement and has a shortage of Educational Psychologists. To make a legal challenge would be costly.

Might the LA funding for SEN change?

The LA SEN budget is challenged by increasing demands and the high cost of specialist out of county placements for some children with complex needs. The LA itself is in deficit and is said to have low funding from Central Government historically. The Government had announced additional SEN funding but the plans for this were not yet clear and the school's income was not likely to improve. The support for SEN children with EHCPs and being assessed for EHCPs was essential for their education and for the good operation of the classrooms for other pupils.

Is it possible to separate out the SEN funding in the budget?

No. The SEN funding is a line within the income.

Were there other areas that contributed to the deficit?

Yes. Supply costs had been higher than expected as it had not proved possible to recruit a teacher for maternity leave cover and the cost of an agency teacher had been high. The income from insurance for maternity leave did not cover the whole cost. Many LSAs were less experienced than in previous years and they were not able to provide as much cover. This also led to an increase in supply costs.

The Nursery numbers were low, although more children would join in January. There were plans to attract more children through greater flexibility.

What method is used for staff recruitment?

Adverts are posted on the LA website and agencies are used as a last resort. Fixed term contracts are the norm but the school had invested in training support staff and would like to retain them for their strong skills. The LA charges £156 for a school to post its own advert on the LA site.

Governors offered their support to the school and to the Business Manager in particular. They would pass information on sources of grants. They gave agreement for a Licensed Deficit Agreement and delegated the detail to the Finance Committee. The Committee would meet on 6 December. Other Governors were invited to attend or send in ideas beforehand.

Governors

6.4 INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 19 November 2024, would be circulated. Governors noted the report of the Committee Chair.

Progress had been made. The LA had completed major projects, although some elements were still to be finished off. The plan to update the Nursery playground would make a significant difference but the canopy was still with the Planning department for a licence to put it up. The LA was to replace windows at the Juniors, fencing and a shed at the Infants and a fencing panel at Shakman Field. The Nurture pod had been installed and was working well.

A lot of maintenance work had been done and there was more to do. The Business Manager had found volunteers from the Buckinghamshire Building Society to paint classrooms at half term and more volunteers from GE would paint classrooms in future.

A lot of work had been done on sustainability. It's place in the curriculum was being considered.

The Health and Safety Policy was being tidied up and the Accessibility Policy was being prepared.

What was the 'near miss'?

The cleaners had smelt gas in a classroom at the weekend. They left the block and opened the windows. On Monday morning the block had been evacuated and the windows had been opened. The LA called Tencer to deal with the situation and they found that a valve needed to be adjusted. The boiler had been repaired before the leak so the inadequate work had been reported to the LA. A pilot light had been on all weekend otherwise the situation would have been still more dangerous.

6.5 PERSONNEL/PAY REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 17 October 2024, having been circulated, were noted.

6.6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT GOVERNORS

Governors noted that the Performance Management Governors had met the Headteacher to review last year's objectives and set new ones.

6.7 HR RELATED PANELS/COMPLAINTS PANEL/PUPIL DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

These Committees have not needed to meet.

7 REPORTS

7.1 REPORT OF THE CHAIR

The Chair had taken no actions under delegated powers. She reminded Committee Chairs to send any newly updated policies to Helen Clowes who was updating the website. The policies should also be uploaded to Governor Hub.

**Committee
Chairs**

7.2 DEVELOPMENT GOVERNOR

Governors were reminded to update training on their safeguarding responsibilities every two years. The Headteacher would forward the link to an on line module from The Key or a webinar could be booked through Governor Hub.

Headteacher

7.3/4 REPORTS OF THE SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING GOVERNOR

Governors noted the reports which had been posted on Governor Hub.

The report mentioned an exclusion. Is that the same as a suspension?

	ACTION
<p><i>It was a suspension, which is fixed term. The term 'exclusion' is for a permanent decision.</i></p>	
<p>7.5 EQUALITY GOVERNOR</p>	
<p>The school's responsibilities are to update its published demographic information at least annually and publish equality objectives at least every four years.</p>	
<p>Targets had been discussed. Governors agreed to adopt the final targets electronically through Governor Hub.</p>	<p>Headteacher /Governors</p>
<p>Discussion had focused on which data points to look at and the changing demographics of the school, staff and families. One challenge was to make assessments without identifying individuals.</p>	
<p>Some updates and tweaks were necessary to the Equality Policy. The need for a statement that equality impact assessments had been done when reviewing the school's policies was considered and agreed. A suitable statement, covering staff and pupils, would be added to all policies to give this assurance across all protected characteristics.</p>	
<p>Equality, diversity and inclusion was taught throughout the curriculum. This was agreed as a topic for a monitoring visit in the Spring.</p>	<p>Chair</p>
<p>A note of the meeting would be circulated and Governors were encouraged to update their training in this area. <i>Patricia English left the meeting</i></p>	<p>Equality Governor Governors</p>
<p>7.6 REPORT OF THE SEND GOVERNOR</p>	
<p>The SEND information report had been shared with Governors. This set out what the school provided for SEND children. Schools were required to publish their 'Local Offer' on the Family Information Service website. The Headteacher would clarify whether a further document was needed. If so, it would be agreed for publication electronically.</p>	<p>Headteacher</p>
<p>7.7 REPORT OF THE PUPIL PREMIUM GOVERNOR</p>	
<p>The visit would take place later.</p>	
<p>7.8 CURRICULUM GOVERNOR REPORTS</p>	
<p>Governors noted the reports on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy, including discussion with the Subject Leads. • GB monitoring visits on sustainability. The reports had not yet been shared. Years 3 and 4 were strong on recycling but not as knowledgeable on sustainability. This was picked up later as evidenced to some degree by Years 5 and 6. • Science – a visit to the Infants on Science had taken place that day and the 	

- report would be shared.
- Numeracy – one Learning Walk had been done and the second would be rearranged.

Visits on Music and ICT were planned.

Are Governor visits made to out of school clubs?

No. Comments from Governors who attend Sports festivals as parents were always welcome. Recent comments were that everyone spoke highly of the school, parents were engaged and pupils’ behaviour was good.

7.9 SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

The Travel Plan Group had met and sent a letter to parents about parking. The Headteacher was going out several days a week and the situation was quieter, particularly when he was there. Fewer cars were using School Lane.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Staff attendance figures

The Headteacher updated his report to give the staff attendance figures this term to date. Governors noted that, without a long term absence at the Infant School, the figures were similar for the two sites.

Infants - 125 days, of which 102 were due to sickness.

Juniors – 68 days due to sickness.

The Headteacher would add the detail to his report.

Headteacher

9 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

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

- Thursday 23 January at 7pm
- Thursday 20 March at 7pm
- Thursday 15 May at 7pm
- Thursday 3 July at 7pm

Governors agreed to cover the GB SEF at the January meeting. Several methods were available and suggestions on the process were welcome. There would be some preparatory work.

Governors

10 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

