

**MINUTES OF THE SUMMER TERM MEETING OF
THE GOVERNORS OF VILLAGE INFANTS SCHOOL
HELD ON 15 MAY 2025
AT THE SCHOOL
(5:15 pm – 7:05 pm)**

Present: Councillor H Spoor (Chair) Mrs S Joy
Mr G Spoor (Vice-chair) Mrs D Rosaman
Mr S Aladetoyinbo Mrs L Sparks
Mr L Buckingham Mrs B Thompson
Mr A Carr Mr R Wells
Ms Y Cattle

Also present: Ms A Whiffin, Deputy Headteacher
Miss J Day, BDSIP Governor Services

MINUTES – PART 1

40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted as follows:

<u>Governor</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Ms N Akhtar	safeguarding issue in school
Miss N Bridge	work commitment

41 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Governors had no personal or business interests to declare.

42 MEMBERSHIP OF GOVERNING BOARD

The governors were informed:

42.1 Co-opted Governors

a) Resignation

that Miss J Archer had resigned from her position as a Co-opted Governor with effect from 12 May 2025. Miss Archer had been a member of the Governing Board since January 2010 when she was appointed as a Parent Governor. Governors expressed their appreciation of Miss Archer's contribution as a governor and Chair of Governors. She had brought a lot of skills to the governing board, and had been particularly helpful with attendance issues. It was **agreed** that governors would hold a collection for a gift at their next meeting.

b) Term of Office

that Mrs B Thompson's term of office as a Co-opted Governor was due to expire on 20 May 2025. Governors agreed to extend Mrs Thompson's appointment if she wished to continue.

c) **Vacancies**

that there were now four vacancies for Co-opted Governors and are asked to consider appointing any suitable people. The Chair reported that she had been approached by a local councillor who was interested in becoming a governor, and this would be followed up. Ms Joy also reported that two retired business people were interested, but they did not live locally now and would not be able to attend meetings in person. Governors were asked to let the Chair know if they could suggest anyone else.

42.2 **Local Authority Governor**

that Mr M Nicholson has deferred his membership as a Local Authority Governor until the Autumn Term.

43 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2025 were confirmed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

44 **HEADTEACHER'S REPORT**

The governors thanked Ms Y Cattle for her clear report. Arising therefrom the governors:

44.1 noted that the Ofsted inspection on 4 and 5 March 2025 was successful. There were no unexpected concerns.

44.2 **asked** if the Quality Assurance visit had been helpful. They were informed that the SIP understood the school and was aware of its strengths.

45 **OFSTED REPORT**

Governors received the report of the Ofsted inspection which took place in March 2025. The actions had already been identified by the school and the inspector acknowledged that action was being taken.

The inspection was positive, and a group of governors had met the inspector.

This was an ungraded inspection so the number of words in the report was restricted. It therefore not possible to include all the positive comments which were made in the verbal feedback, e.g. the contribution of governors who were able to speak about their own areas of responsibility.

Governors recorded their thanks to all staff and pupils for a successful inspection which confirmed that the school was doing well. The Chair **agreed** to write a letter of thanks on behalf of the governors.

Governors **asked** if parents had been informed of the inspection outcome, and they were informed that it would be included on the school website.

46 **COMMITTEES**

The minutes of committee meetings were received for information as follows:

Finance Committee	18 March 2025
Quality of Education Committee	27 March 2025

Governors were also informed that the Organisational Change Committee had met on 29th April 2025 to decide changes to the staffing structure which were necessary to help set a balanced budget.

47 FINANCE REPORT

The governors:

- 47.1 received the outturn report for 2024/25 which was presented by Ms Joy, School Business Manager. The opening balance had changed slightly from the budget presented in 2024 because some additional income was received for Healthy Schools. The year ended with a total closing balance of £51,189 compared to £4,971 in the initial budget. This improvement was due to additional income (e.g. Teachers' Pay Grant) and reduced spending which outweighed any overspends. Governors thanked Ms Joy for managing the school's finances so carefully.
- 47.2 received the proposed budget for 2025/26 to 2027/28 and noted that there would be a deficit of £259,703 in 2025/26 unless spending was reduced. The deficit would increase to £832,758 by year 3. The following assumptions had been made:
- 5% unfunded pay increase for teacher for 3 years
 - 3.2% unfunded pay increase for support staff in 2025/26 followed by 2% for 2 years
 - 4% inflation for 3 years
 - A gradual increase in pupil numbers until the school was full
 - High needs top-up £190k (£189,475 was received in 2024/25)
 - Recruitment to cover leavers including TAs, LSAs, part-time Finance Officer, 2 teachers and 1 Maternity cover.
- 47.3 considered two alternative budget plans which would form the recovery plan to reduce the deficit.
- a) Scenario 1 – this had been discussed and agreed by the Organisational Change Committee in April.
- Leavers not replaced and roles covered by existing staff
 - Reduce Education Support Staff by 55 hours in September 2025 through redundancies (equivalent to 2 x 27.5 hours)
 - This would reduce the deficit in 2025/26 to £76,403 and £252,575 by year 3.
- b) Scenario 2 – a new proposal
- Leavers not replaced and roles covered by existing staff
 - Reduce Education Support Staff by 166 hours in October 2025 (equivalent to 6 x 27.5 hours)
 - This would reduce the deficit to £30,436 in 2025/26, and there would be a surplus of £11,276 in year 3.
- 47.4 discussed the options at length and noted that rising SEND high needs was creating financial pressures due to uncertainty about funding. The school did receive a large one-off payment in the past due to the number of children with

complex needs. Managing so many children with fewer staff would create a greater risk of accidents to staff and pupils.

- 47.5 were concerned that children with EHCPs did not appear to be distributed fairly across schools. Not all placements were made by parental choice. Mainstream schools receive less funding for these pupils than if they attended schools with ARPs or special schools. Governors **enquired** how many of the children should be placed at Trinity Special School, and they were informed that 7-8 should be in special schools. Governors agreed that mainstream schools should receive similar funding. Mr Carr **agreed** to check EHCP figures in different schools.
- 47.6 noted that schools must set their budgets by 31 May but they are not notified of SEND funding until much later in the financial year. This creates more uncertainty.
- 47.7 **asked** what would happen if the school did not set a realistic recovery plan to avoid a deficit budget. They were informed that the LA could issue a warning notice leading to the withdrawal of financial delegation. The LA does offer loans to support school budgets, but these incur interest charges.
- 47.8 were concerned that the LA may think that schools which manage SEND children well do not need as much extra funding.
- 47.9 noted that reducing the number of support staff for SEND pupils could result in behaviour problems and safety issues. The school might need to consider excluding a pupil as a last resort. There could also be a negative impact on staff wellbeing.
- 47.10 **enquired** why the school did not have an ARP for the high needs pupils. They were informed that this had been considered but the LA advised that ARPs do not work well in separate infant schools.
- 47.11 **asked** if the school could seek advice from an external auditor to suggest savings, e.g. offering voluntary redundancy.
- 47.12 enquired if the school could refuse to admit pupils with high needs. They were informed that children can still be allocated if the school is named in their EHCP.
- 47.13 considered the two scenarios and concluded, with regret, that only scenario 2 would clear the deficit within 3 years. Unfortunately difficult decisions had to be taken.
- a) They **agreed** that Scenario 2 should be submitted as the budget and recovery plan. However, it was suggested that the redundancies could be phased, e.g. 4 by October 2025 when the financial position could be reviewed in the light of staff movement, pupil numbers, and any changes in income. Voluntary redundancies could be considered, but there would be no obligation to approve any applications. The school was likely to lose highly skilled staff.
 - b) Governors were informed that the Chair was preparing a letter to send on their behalf to the Director of Education about SEND funding concerns.
 - c) Governors **asked** what would happen if the recovery took longer than three years. They were informed that the School Business Manager had not looked at figures beyond three years yet.
 - d) The governors were satisfied that they could demonstrate that they had thought the position through carefully.

47.14 were informed that the Headteacher's appraisal had been completed in March. Short term objectives were set because the next appraisal was due during the Autumn Term.

48 **SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

The Safeguarding update was included in the Headteacher's report.

49 **DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES REPORT**

The Director's report was received. Arising therefrom the governors:

49.1 **Attendance Performance, Local and National Update**

received the report on local and national attendance data and were reminded to familiarise themselves with their statutory responsibilities on school attendance.

49.2 **Schools Strengthening Inclusion and Belonging Through Rights Respecting Schools Awards (RRSA) & Race & Social Justice (RSJ) Initiative**

noted the updates on two initiatives: Schools Strengthening Inclusion and Belonging Through RRSA and the Race & Social Justice (RSJ) Initiative. They were asked to enquire if the school was involved in any RSJ case studies, and to consider the benefits of the school signing up to the RRSA.

49.3 **Information Items**

received and noted the following reports which were presented for information:

1. Special Educational Needs and Disability Update
2. The Aspire Virtual School Education Report 2023-24
3. London Governors' Newsletter Summer 2025

50 **TRAINING AND LIAISON GOVERNOR'S REPORT**

The governors noted that the Training and Liaison Governor post was vacant due to Miss Archer's resignation. Mrs D Rosaman agreed to cover this role.

Mrs Rosaman was congratulated on successfully completing the Governor Accreditation Programme assessment. The course leader had praised her outstanding workbook which showed her excellent knowledge of safeguarding and data in the school.

51 **GOVERNORS' REPORTS**

Governors received the following reports from members with posts of responsibility:

51.1 **Health and Safety: Mr G Spoor**

Mr Spoor had visited with Mr Wells to look at the feasibility of creating a side gate as a separate entrance to the Nursery on the piece of land behind the old library. It was **agreed** that Richard Hallgate-Hills should be invited to visit with Mr Spoor, Mr Wells, Ms Cattle and Ms Joy to discuss the possible installation of a gate.

51.2 Attendance Governor vacancy

Governors noted that there was a vacancy for Attendance Governor following Miss Archer's resignation. The Chair agreed to cover this role until a new governor was appointed.

52 CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair:

52.1 Action items

- a) informed the governors that there had been no urgent action items since the last Governing Board meeting. She had visited the school several times, including an opportunity to talk to some Year 2 children. Governors were reminded that they were always welcome to arrange to visit the school when they were available
- b) informed the governors that she had recently been appointed as a governor of William Ford Church of England Junior School to help improve transition arrangements between the two schools.

52.2 Correspondence

had received the letter with the latest Ofsted report.

53 ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS

53.1 Policies

Governors **approved** the following policies as presented:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Lockdown Procedure
- Home School Agreement
- PSHE Policy incorporating RSE
- Complaints Policy

54 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The governors noted that the Quality of Education Committee meeting would be held on Thursday 17 July 2025 at 5:15 pm

55 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The governors had no items to be dealt with on a confidential basis.

Actions/Follow up			
Min 42.1	b)	Governors agreed to appoint Mrs B Thompson for another term of office as a Co-opted Governor.	Governor Services

	c) Chair invited suggestions for new Co-opted Governors. A local councillor to be contacted.	Governors/Chair
Min 45	Chair to write a letter of thanks to everyone involved in the successful Ofsted inspection	Chair
Min 47.5	Mr Carr to check the number of EHCPs in other schools.	A Carr
Min 47.13	Scenario 2 to be submitted as the school's financial recovery plan. A phased approach to be taken to the staff reductions – the financial position to be reviewed in the Autumn Term.	School Business Manager
Min 50	Mrs Rosaman agreed to cover Training and Liaison Governor role	Governor Services
Min 51.1	School to invite Richard Hallgate-Hills to visit the school to look at possible installation of a new entrance gate for the Nursery.	School
Min 51.2	Chair to cover Attendance Governor role	Governor Services