St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation

Minutes of the 8th December 2025 FGB (Full Governing Board Meeting) at St Johns

Key: Action **Q/C** Question/Comment **R** Response For info and/or document reference on Governor Hub

Present:	**Apologies:**
1. Sian Williams SW **Chair** (Co opted Governor) 2. Katie Blakemore KB (Staff Governor) 3. Caroline Chichester CC (Foundation Governor) 4. Santanu De SD (Parent Governor) 5. Lee-Ann Gibbons LAG (Foundation Governor) 6. Keith Harvey KH (Ex Officio Governor) 7. Gabrielle McGarvey GM (Foundation Governor) 8. James Spillings JS (Parent Governor) 9. Duane Turner DT (Foundation Governor) 10. Julia Ward JW (Co opted Governor) (arrived at 7.17pm) 11. Magdalen Wind-Mozley MWM (Foundation Governor) Chrys Healy (Clerk) ChH **Meeting was quorate. Duration of meeting:** 7.00 – 8.40pm	12. Rev Gary Collins GC (Ex-officio Foundation Governor) 13. Will Hunter Smart (Ex-officio Foundation Governor) 14. Clive Loveless CL (Associate Member) 15. Barbara McKenzie BM (Foundation Governor) **In attendance:** Louise Thornton-Allen LTA (Associate Member) Ken Dowling KD **Absent:** Claire Hall CH (Co opted Governor), Lauren King LK (Associate Member) 15 governors currently in post (the quorum is 7)

	Opening thoughts CC advised that the SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) working party had discussed this at their last meeting and had agreed to reinstate 'Opening thoughts' as it provides a grounding for the purpose of an FGB meeting as governors of a church school and of the spiritual purpose. CC explained that Advent was the beginning of the church year and highlighted the following from John 1: **1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **4** In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Verses that were so difficult to understand but the following words by Walt Wilkin may help explain them a little: *I can't explain a blessed thing* *Not a fallen star or a feathered wing* *Or how a man in chains has the strength to sing* *Just one thing is clear to me* *There's always more than what appears to be* *And when the light's just right, I swear I see* *Poetry*	
1.	**Welcome** SW welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that Ken Dowling was here to observe the meeting as he was thinking of applying to be a Co opted Governor. SW asked everyone to introduce themselves and explain their roles and responsibilities on the governing board. **Apologies** were received and accepted from BM, GC, WHS and CL. SW confirmed that the meeting was quorate.	
2.	**Declarations/Conflicts of interests** ChH clerks for Victoria Park Nursery School & Family Hub and JS's wife works at St Johns. **Confidentiality:** Governors were reminded that the items discussed were confidential. All documents were for public view unless stated otherwise by this meeting. Any conflicts of interest needed to be declared when the item was discussed.	
3.	**Minutes of previous meetings** held on 21st October 2025 (D3 FGB minutes 21.10.25) **Approved** **Matters Arising/Outstanding Actions** [1] **Religious Education Curriculum V1.1 Action:** Bring forward Religious Education Curriculum V1.1 when new syllabus published. KH advised that this had now been published and the school would now need to review the Religious Education Curriculum. **Ongoing**	**KH** asap

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	[3] **Terms of Reference – Vice Chairs each committee** BM had been appointed as Vice Chair for the AC (Admissions Committee) at the 20.11.25 meeting, ChH had been appointed as Vice Chair for the S&C at the 25.11.25 meeting. Vice Chair of FC to be confirmed. **Ongoing** [4] **D6 Equality Policy SJN038 V1.3 Action:** SW to review the wording and bring forward to the 8.12.25 FGB. SW advised that this would be discussed under item 8. All other actions had been completed or were on the agenda for this meeting.	
4.	**Governance** **4a: FDP** (Federation Governance Plan) (4a StJStN Federation Governance Plan 2025-27 V3 23.10.25) SW had included timescales be where possible on the FDP as requested, the only change had been to propose adding an 11th target specific to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The Effective Governance Group had agreed to reconvene an Equality Working Party, with the collective responsibility for reviewing/resetting the Equality Objectives. Holding an annual meeting in Spring Term 1 and be included as an agenda item for the Spring Term 2 FGB to ensure that the policy and objectives were reviewed annually. **Action:** Equalities Working Party and FDP to be on the 24.2.26 FGB agenda. Governors had no questions **4b: Governor Recruitment** (5a.3 Combined Governors Skills Audit 2024 25 14 govs) **Resignation** ChH advised governors that CL had decided not to continue as an Associate Member and had resigned, but he would continue to come in to school weekly to hear the children read. Governors wanted to express their deep thanks for his commitment to and support for the schools and the magnificent work he had done over the years, particularly when St Johns and St Nics were federating and were very pleased that he would continue to come in and read with the children. JW arrived **Update governor appointments** SW explained there was a delay by the LA (Local Authority) regarding her re appointment as the LA Governor, once this happened KD could apply to be a Co opted Governor. GC had suggested Heidi Nunn, a parishioner, as a Foundation Governor, she had been sent the application form and once it was completed it would be submitted to the diocese. SIAMS had also discussed ways of recruiting governors and agreed that SW would resend the advert that had been used for BM and CC would circulate to the churches (St Nic's, St George's, St Johns and St Michael's) and ask relevant church staff to bring it to attention of their congregations. Parents and staff would be approached if this wasn't successful. **Governors Skills Audit** It would also help to have a look at the Combined Governors Skills Audit 2024 25 (5a.3 Combined Governors Skills Audit 2024 25 14 govs) to look at the current skills base to help inform what would be needed and identify any noticeable skills gaps. The Effective Governance Group had noticed that an area a number of governors had highlighted was knowledge regarding the school's financial management, which was a responsibility for all governors not just those on the FC. Governors discussed the possibility of DT explaining this area at the next FGB. **4c: Parent Surveys** The parent surveys had been carried out alongside the parents' evenings which had nearly all taken place and there had been 85 responses so far. **Action** KH to provide a report on the responses for the parent surveys at the 24.2.26 FGB. **Staff Surveys** KH would work with BM to put together a Staff Survey for Spring Term 1 and one for Summer Term 2. **4d: GARs** (Governor Activity Reports) (4d GARs folder) SW explained that there were 4 reports in the GARs folder covering; Leadership Forum 19.10.25, Cyber Choice Prevent Training 20.10.25, Learning Walk English 17.11.25 and the Ofsted Webinar on the new Framework 27.11.25. The following areas were highlighted: **Leadership Forum** WBC had distributed a document regarding Consultation – Managing Primary School Places, our area had the lowest capacity in the WBC area, KH felt it was looking like WBC was looking at possibly closing smaller schools. **Action:** All governors to be sent a copy of the Managing Primary School Places document. This may be related to the government review regarding LA's and the possibility of the	**ChH** 24.2.26 **KH** 24.2.26 **KH** asap

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	creation of a new Ridgeway Council made up of West Berkshire Council and the district councils in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. KH explained if this happened it would have a massive impact on schools, SW said that only the consultation was mentioned at the forum. SD noted a question regarding under capacity had been asked at the forum but there had been an inconclusive response. Governors felt that the reason WBC wanted to join with a Ridgeway Council was that other option would mean them joining with more town based councils like Reading. **Learning Walk Writing 17.11.25** MWM had done this with BM, met with LTA and LAG, Year 4/5 teachers and looked at Years 4 and 5. They noted the children's enthusiasm, saw what they were doing and how staff were addressing their needs and moving to Greater Depth assessment outcomes. There were strict rules regarding punctuation and a focus on this and spelling and sentence construction. Children seemed to enjoy planning and illustrated this in their books. The plan was for MWM, JS and CH to go back in January 2026. **Recording visits Governor Hub** ChH explained that governors could now log their visits on Governor Hub. They just needed to log in, click Governing Board then Visits the + Add a new Visit they could then record dates, purpose of visits, make comments and upload any reports. All GARs reports were also on Governor Hub in the Documents area folder 7.1 Governors Activity/Link Reports/Schedule leadership Forum. **4e: Governors in School Day** A day still hadn't been arranged governors discussed finding a date all governors could make was lovely but difficult to organise a day they could all make. It was agreed that if governors had a morning or afternoon that they could come into one of the schools they should contact LTA to arrange it, MWM was also happy to attend if that helped other governor, SW happy to co ordinate with staff to arrange this. **Action:** All governors to email SW with dates they could visit the school in the Spring Term 1 2026 before the 23.2.26 FGB.	**KH** asap
5.	**Committee Reports** **5a: AC** (Admissions Committee) (5a D1 AC Mins 20 10 25) Nothing to add since the 20.10.25 AC. **5b: FC** (Finance Committee) (5b D2 FC Mins 11.11.25) DT highlighted the following: • The current projected carry forward was down for approximately £58k to £41k, mainly due to Supply Teacher cost, employing an HLTA (Higher Level Teaching Assistant) from Jan 26, 1 teacher was moving to the UPS (Upper pay Scale), TA to support a child with an EHCP (Education Healthcare Plan) and additional support was needed for a new child in Reception, they would get approximately £3k from the LA but this wouldn't be enough to cover the support costs. **C** The HTLA would work across both schools, interviews had taken place and the role had been offered to an applicant. Over the past 3 weeks there had been a lot of teacher absence so a Supply Teacher had to be used. • An additional £7k expenditure for pay awards for this financial year had been approved. • In a good place regarding pupil numbers compared to other schools, currently 12 in Nursery and 61 in Reception. • SD offered to look at the Risk Register. **Action:** ChH to send latest version of the Risk Register to SD asap. • The staff:student ratio had gone up. • The toilet work had been completed. • The Nursery numbers were improving. • LA to be asked for a model Business Continuity Plan template. • Heat pump work had been completed, just the central control system needed to be installed. • IT update discussed **see item 6c** for minutes of the discussion. • An application had been made to the Diocese regarding the roof leak at St Johns. • There had been a visit from the Diocesan net zero adviser regarding the possibility of the school being involved in having solar panels and LED lighting installed as part of a diocesan project.	**ChH/SD** asap

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	Private Funds JS's father in law had looked at the Private Fund accounts and identified areas that needed to be addressed and would be contacting CB to discuss the next steps. Everyone thanked for their input. **5c: S&C** (Standards & Curriculum Committee) (5c D2 S&C minutes 25.11.25) MWM highlighted the following: • The major point was the good mock SATs (Standard Assessment Tests) results given that it was a difficult year group that had been impacted by the Covid period. • IDSR's (Inspection Data Summary Report) these were in an unwieldy format but noted that the teaching days lost due to staff absences were higher than the national average in 2023/24. 8 days on average were lost to teacher sickness in 2023/24. This was in the highest 20% nationally. Staff turnover was in the highest 20% in 2023. The Supply teacher used to cover these absences was observed during MWM's Learning Walk and they were very good and knew the school and its systems well. • There had been a need for the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) to cover teaching staff absences hopefully this would improve with the recruitment of a HLTA to start in January 2026. • CC's Link Governor Reports on RE, SEND and PSHE were in the Visits section on Governor Hub. Governors were encouraged to look at the last Link Governor Reports when they were doing a more recent one. • **Q** Governors asked if there was any guidance regarding what the expectation of governors was for Link Visits ? **R** The main thing was to communicate and talk about what was being done for the children, it should last about ½ hour, all teachers had to produce a development plan which could be a good starting point. It was also worth looking at the Governors Visits Policy, which was on Governor Hub. Governors should contact LTA to organise a Link visit. **5d: SIAMS** CC advised they had met on 24.11.24 and discussed the following: • Keep the spirituality statement as it. • Re instate Opening Thoughts to FGB meetings • Curriculum policies now have a spirituality paragraph to prompt teachers to think how spirituality is evident in the subject. • New RE curriculum details still not yet known but there will be some mention of non-religious world views and humanism. • How to recruit Foundation governors. Thanks expressed to all the SIAMS team and for the work they did.	
6.	**School Reports/Updates/Training** **6a: EHTR** (Executive Headteachers Report) (6a Headteacher Report to Governors Autumn 2025.docx) KH explained that this had been re formatted to reflect the new Ofsted framework headings and highlighted the following: • **NOR** (Numbers on Roll) St Johns - 182, St Nics - 285. • **Attendance** was a bit better at St Johns than St Nics where 1 child's persistent absences were affecting the figures. • **Suspensions** were currently 8 across both schools it was 6 in the last report. • **Complaints** had been a lot more than in the last EHTR, some were multiple complaints from the same person. **Q** Governors asked if the complaints had been resolved ? **R** All complaints had been resolved, although not all to parents' satisfaction and there has been a notable increase in written complaints this term. Parents had complained about the Year 6 DT (Design & Technology) project to create a mobile phone case which they felt was not in line with school trying to discourage the use of mobile phones.	

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- **Q** Was the school receiving updates on the child currently attending Alternative Provision ? **R** KB confirmed they were when helpful.
- **SCR** (Single Central Record) There had been issues with the SCR system this term, so compliance had been difficult to prove. This has now been sorted and we are able to complete the record for all existing staff. The SCR should be available for checking after the Christmas break. MWM had been in regularly to check the situation.
- **Attendance and Behaviour** was relatively similar in both schools and represent above average attendance compared with national figures 38.5% excellent attendance at St Johns, 38% excellent attendance at St Nics. The current attendance percentages at each school are very similar. The colour coding in the graphs in the report were Blue - Excellent attendance, Green - Good attendance, Orange - at risk of persistent absence. Some parents were giving their children 'mental health and wellbeing' days off school, KH felt this could be viewed as authorising truancy. C Governors agreed that if parents wanted to give their child a 'mental health and wellbeing' off school the school needed to ask why as it would probably be better for the child to be in school.
- **Behaviour** was positive in both schools, however a small number of children with behaviour issues had a significant impact on other children and staff. Meeting the needs of children with behaviour issues versus the needs of the whole school was difficult to balance.
- Governors found the way Personal Development and Wellbeing was being reported in the EHTR was very helpful.
- 3 Reception children were suspended as they weren't school ready, they weren't able to sit and play alongside others. One was very young for their age, one had experienced trauma and one was a SEND child.

6b: FDP (Federation Development Plan) This hadn't been included in the paperwork for this meeting as SW would bring to an FGB that didn't have an EHTR. She felt that the current targets aligned between the FDP and EHTR, the only area that needed looking at was including something regarding assessment. KH advised this was an area they would be focusing on in the Spring Term 2026 and more in formation would be available then.

6c: Proposed Change to Cloud - Based Server Folder (6 Proposed Change to Cloud - 6c.1 Rationale for Proposed Change to Cloud, 6c.2 Ask4Support Detailed Quote.pdf, 6c.3 IT Project and Services Proposal St Johns & St Nic's - V2 (1).pdf) DT explained that usually 3 quotes were provided for this sort of expenditure. SD, who had expertise in this area, had also helped to ensure the proposals were water tight.

KH explained that both schools currently use fixed servers on the individual premises. These were managed by our IT provider and updated as necessary. The current system means that each school has a separate IT system and all files are currently usable only when in the individual school which presented a number of problems. He went through the Rationale for Proposed Change to Cloud Based Server and explained why the school would normally obtain further quotes he was recommending that the school proceeded with the Ask4Support quote because it made sense for our current provider to provide the change as they understand the system. If another provider was used, it would be difficult for Ask4Support to continue to manage the school's services. Governors discussed the requirement to get 3 quotes but also noted that the Financial Management Policies & Procedures allowed leeway if governors agreed that one supplier was the best option. **Q** Governors asked if there was an annual charge ? **R** KH said it would be £1500/year. **Q** SD asked if he had any concerns about the Ask4Support quote. **R** Not at the moment and there had been a verbal agreement that they would train the staff to use Sharepoint.

SD advised that, in his opinion, the quote was broadly in line with what would be expected for this type of work. The total quote for the job was £16,635.60 including VAT. If governors approved the work the migration could be done during the Easter break 2026 to minimise disruption across the schools. They had agreed that staff would get training to use Sharepoint as part of installing the system. **Q** Governors asked if this would have an effect on the current projected carry forward ? **R** KH said it wouldn't as it was part of

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	Capital money and would set up the school for the future. **Governors approved the Ask4Support quote for £16,635.60** Governors expressed their thanks to everyone involved in putting in a lot of time to put together the proposed change to the IT system, which would make a world of difference to everyone working at the school. They also noted that using Sharepoint would be a start to enforcing a digital approach which could also save printing out paper document costs and change the mindset, digitalising the system could also help with work flow management.	
7.	**Staffing** **SENCo** (Special Educational Needs Co Ordinator) (7a SENCo Rationale for Governors.docx) (7b Special Needs Coordinator Job Description.docx) KH explained that, as governors were aware, KB the current Inclusion Lead was moving to another role outside of the federation, KB had done a fantastic job for the federation across a number of areas and was much appreciated by everyone. It was an appropriate time for the federation to make decisions on how to move forwards with support for their more vulnerable children. The LAC (Looked After Children) role could be taken on by KH and the overarching PP (Pupil Premium) area could be taken on between the SLT. The SENCo was a specialist role and someone would need to be recruited. Currently KB worked 4 days/week across both schools plus 1 day teaching. This enabled an understanding of the children across both schools. The school would need to look at renumeration with consistency across the SLT. KH's proposal was to advertise in January 2026 both internally and externally and applicants must have the mandatory SEND qualification or at least started the SEND qualification process. **C** Governors noted that there would be a lot of pressure on the SLT to cover these areas. **R** KH said hopefully appointing a HLTA in January 2026 would help and a new SENCo could start in April 2026. **Q** Governors asked if they would be required to teach from Reception to Year 6 ? **R** KH explained all staff should have experience in all year groups and now staff had training for this. **Q** Governors asked if this too high a level of expectation ? **R** KH said that most SENCo's did teach alongside their SEND role and the school needed someone with the ability to look outside the box and see the bigger picture. KH thanked for putting the information together for this. **Governors approved the SENCo rationale and job description.** **Q** Governors asked if the expectation of this role proved too much after 12 months would it be worth setting a review date, especially if the SLT were still covering teaching classes ? **R** Generally there would be an assessment of how new staff were settling in usually by the St Johns HoS. Target 8 in the FDP was mindful of this. (Ensure staff wellbeing has a high priority and focus on the welfare of the whole school community; children, staff, families and on the social and emotional needs of vulnerable children in particular). All staff did Safeguarding training and were aware of the importance of mental health and wellbeing.	
8.	**Equalities Working Party** (8a D6 Equality Policy SJN038 V1.3) SW explained this had been looked at in October 2026 and areas for review had been noted. It made sense to reconvene the Equalities Working Party to look at the policy information, objectives were last set in 2022. Potentially the Equalities Working Party could meet once a year and consist of MWM, SW, KH and EWP. **Q** Governors asked if more people were needed ? **R** It would be good to have a diversity of views. DT offer to join the group was approved and they would meet in the Spring Term 2026 and report back to governors.	
9.	**Vulnerable Groups** KB advised she had nothing to add to the report given to the 25.11.25 S&C which were in the minutes included in the paperwork for this meeting. **C** CC had one SEND meeting with KB and was blown away by the range of things she had to manage. Governors expressed their big thanks for KB's excellent work in this area and felt they needed to look at having a Vulnerable Group Policy.	

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	C KH said that in the last 3/4 weeks the school had been asked to take on 3 children by the LA because the school did such a good job with these children, currently they had said they couldn't take them but if they were directed by the LA to take them on they would have to.	
10.	**Safeguarding** MWM (Safeguarding and e safety Governor) highlighted the following: • MWM advised that the issues with the SCR had been resolved and JW had attended the Safeguarding Network meeting and the presentation slides had been shared with governors. There had been some changes to the KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe In Education) 2025 (link was on Governor Hub in documents folder 1.4 Annual Declaration Forms inc KCSIE) one area highlighted was the need for schools to ask how children's online activity was being monitored, which had been one of the complaints made. **Q** What was being watched ? **R** A BBC CBeebies programme showing Spidey and His Amazing Friends, which now included misinformation. • Jatinder Mathuru was the new Safeguarding Lead for WBC. • The school was talking to children about fake music • Using AI to filter and monitor. • All staff working together to improve attendance • The RSHE (Relationships & Sex Education) Policy was to be reviewed. **Q** Governors asked how often was this policy reviewed ? **R** Annually including consultation with parents. Governors agreed that a culture of Safeguarding should be the highest priority. • There was proof of effective recording of issues and keeping documents. KH felt the documents were very much up to date but KB noted that parent conversations were not always recorded. • The Ofsted Safeguarding RAG rating (Red Amber Green) was quite good.	
11.	**H&S** (Health & Safety) GM (H&S Governor) GM passed on her as she hadn't done anything this term but would arrange a meeting with CB (Clotilde Biais) the SBM (School Business Manager) in the Spring Term 2026.	
12.	**Policies Information/Approval/Updates** Folder 12 Policies Approval/Information/Review SW thanked BM, JW, KH and ChH for all their work in this area. The proposed corrections were highlighted in red and ChH confirmed that any changes to policies had been highlighted in red on the draft versions and once the policies were approved, they would be updated. **12.1: Information** Folder **Admissions Policies** 2027/28 ChH explained that these were for information only **12.2: Approval** **Appraisal Policy SJN008 V1.4** (D2 Appraisal Policy SJN008 V1.4) Statutory. **Approved** subject to SW checking that the updates in draft 2 were correct. **Behaviour Policy v2.2 KH Sept 2025** (D2 Behaviour Policy v2.2 KH Sept 2025) Statutory **Approved** **Behaviour Principles Written Statement SJN033 V1.2** (D2 Behaviour Principles Written Statement SJN033 V1.2) Statutory **Approved** **Best Value Statement SJN054 V1.2** (D1 Best Value Statement SJN054 V1.2) **Approved** **Debt Management & Recovery Policy SJN055 V1.2** (D1 Debt Management & Recovery Policy SJN055 V1.2) **Approved** **Governor Visits Policy SJN009 V1.3** (D1 Governor Visits Policy SJN009 V1.3) **Approved** **Health and Safety Policy Nov 2025** (D1 Health and Safety Policy Nov 2025) **Approved** **Monitoring & Evaluation Policy SJN002 V1.3** (D2 Monitoring & Evaluation Policy SJN002 V1.3) **Approved** **Private Fund Policy, SJN057 V1.1** (D1 Private Fund Policy, SJN057 V1.1) **Approved** **St J Wraparound Care Procedure SJN059 V1.3 Nov 25** (D2 St N Wraparound Care Procedures SJN060 V1.3 2025) **Approved** **St N Wraparound Care Procedures SJN060 V1.3 2025** (D2 St N Wraparound Care Procedures SJN060 V1.3 2025) **Approved**	**SW** asap

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	12.3: Updates **Equality Policy** see item 8a SEND Policy **D3 Health and Safety Policy & Procedures 2025 V1.3** (D3 Health and Safety Policy & Procedures 2025 V1.3) KH explained schools were waiting for the latest model policy from the LA.	
13.	**AOB** (Any Other Business) **None** SW thanked everyone for their time, it had been really helpful and a lot had been done. She thanked the school for the support for the living advent calendar project that MWM was involved with wished everyone a fantastic Christmas. The meeting ended at 8.40pm	
	Date of next FGB: Tuesday 24th February 2025 7pm in person at St Johns	

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