St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation

Minutes of the Virtual 28th April 2026 FGB (Full Governing Board Meeting)

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

Present:	**Apologies:**
1. Sian Williams SW **Chair** (LA Governor) 2. Katie Blakemore KB (Staff Governor) (joined at 7.10pm) 3. Santanu De SD (Parent Governor) 4. Ken Dowling KD (Co opted Governor) (joined at 7.05pm) 5. Lee-Ann Gibbons LAG (Foundation Governor) 6. Keith Harvey KH (Ex Officio Governor) 7. Gabrielle McGarvey GM (Foundation Governor) 8. Barbara McKenzie BM (Foundation Governor) 9. Duane Turner DT (Foundation Governor) 10. Julia Ward JW (Co opted Governor) 11. Magdalen Wind-Mozley MWM (Foundation Governor) Chrys Healy (Clerk) ChH **Meeting was quorate. Duration of meeting:** 7.00 - 7.45pm	12. Caroline Chichester CC (Foundation Governor) 13. Will Hunter Smart (Ex-officio Foundation Governor) 14. James Spillings JS (Parent Governor) **Absent:** Rev Gary Collins GC (Ex-officio Foundation Governor), Claire Hall CH (Co opted Governor) **In attendance:** Louise Thornton-Allen LTA (Associate Member), Lauren King LK (Associate Member), Richard Denning 16 governors in post (the quorum is 8)

	Opening thoughts **Preparing for International Evening 1.5.26 by thinking about Victor Glover's Easter address from Artemis 2** *Maybe the distance we are from you makes you think what we're doing is special. But we're the same distance from you, and I'm trying to tell you, just trust me, you are special. In all of this emptiness, this is a whole bunch of nothing, this thing we call the universe. You have this oasis, this beautiful place that we get to exist - together. I think as we go into Easter Sunday thinking about, you know, all the cultures all around the world, whether you celebrate it or not, whether you believe in God or not, this is an opportunity for us to remember where we are, who we are, and that we are the same thing and that we've got to get through this together.*	
1.	**Welcome Apologies, Declaration of Quoracy** **Apologies** were received and accepted from CC, JS. SW confirmed that the meeting was quorate. ChH explained that they were waiting for the Diocese to have the relevant meeting to approve RD's application to be a Foundation Governor. **Action:** ChH to pass on information regarding relevant LA New to Governance training to KD and RD once RD's appointment had been approved by the Diocese. **Welcome** SW welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted the International Evening for families of St John's and St Nic's which was to be held on Friday May 1st at 6:30pm, in St Nic's School Hall, to celebrate the rich cultures of the school community. Governors were invited to join everyone for an eventful evening for all, which was also an opportunity for governors to see the school's vision 'for the good of all' in action. **Confidentiality:** Governors are reminded of the need to declare any business interest and potential conflict of interest before any individual agenda item and consider whether it would be appropriate to withdraw from the meeting. Governors were also reminded that the items discussed were confidential. All documents were for public view unless stated otherwise by this meeting. Governors took the decision that documentation related to the budget was not for public view.	**ChH** asap
2.	**Declarations/Conflicts of interests** ChH clerks for Victoria Park Nursery School & Family Hub.	
3.	**Approve 2026 27 budget** (3.1 Budget Planner 2026_27 incl historic data and SBS Bud Mon v3 Fed), (3.2 Budget Variance - 24.04.2026.xlsx). KH noted that when the FGB had last met governors had been advised how tough it would be to set a balanced budget, the good news was that as CB (School Business Manager) had outlined in her report the position was looking more positive. Whilst the school was projected to be in surplus at the end of this financial year there could be a significant deficit in the future but at least they had a year to address this and there would need to be significant changes. (KD joined the meeting) This was due to a number of things including:	

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- Anticipated deficit for the 2028/29 financial year was approximately £92k.
- The reduction of TA (Teaching Assistant) hours had helped achieve a non - deficit position for this financial year. This is not through redundancies, some of the temporary contracts will not be renewed.
- Projected income was reduced due to less children applying for places, this was also the position in other schools. A lot of other schools were looking at combining classes if their numbers fell but this wouldn't be feasible as Years 2 and 3 had 112 children across 4 classes, if this was reduced to 3 classes there would be approximately 37 children/class which would be impossible to manage.
- The good news was that the school would be able to set a balanced budget but there wasn't a lot of room in the budget.
- Possible ways to address the future budget pressures included; get more children into the school, this was something affecting all local schools, so it was a more competitive school's admissions environment. The school did benefit from the demographic moving into the area because of local businesses.
- All services bought in had increased above the rate of inflation; utility costs increasing, though this wouldn't affect St Nics as much because of the solar panels being installed. Bought in services, like HR (Human Resources) from the LA (Local Authority) could be reviewed.

Governors wanted to record their grateful thanks to CB for the massive amount of work she had done to produce the budget and they appreciated the margins were tight.

Academisation **Q** Governors asked if Academisation could be an option and could this reduce the spend on HR/legal for example ? **R** KH explained there were positives and negatives to this and may be worth considering in the future but they would need to join the Academy Trust which was right for the school and also whether a decision to do so whilst right at the time it was made would be right five years down the line.

Solar panels **Q** Governors asked when the benefit of installing the solar panels would be ? **R** KH explained the school would benefit in the future.

TAs **Q** Governors noted that the reduction of TA (Teaching Assistant) hours would be across both schools and that the Fixed Term temporary contracts would not be renewed, how was the school planning to manage equitably ? **R** KH had talked to HR who had specified what should be done, including producing job descriptions for the roles and asking relevant staff to apply if they wanted to. There was a limit to the number of times a temporary contract could be renewed after 2 years it became a de facto permanent contract. KH explained that the reduction in TA hours would impact on both schools but there were fewer EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan) children joining the school than expected, the EHCP children in Year 6 would be moving on and the 2 children possibly joining Reception may now not be coming.

Admissions **Q** Governors asked whether it was worth advising various parent groups that there were spaces available ie Educafe. Some parents were keen to get places and weren't aware they may be available. KH explained that if a child had a sibling already at the school, they had more chance of being offered a place. Meeting discussed how governors could help advocate the school across the range of groups they were already involved in like the churches. If all governors could spread the word and raise awareness about the school in any groups they were involved in and if there could be a model information document that could be included in relevant documents that could be useful. Suggestions included; the Parent Village Whatsap group; setting up a Facebook page, currently there was one but it was just for the school and parents it wasn't accessible to everyone. Setting up a separate page would take time to manage so it may be worth seeing if current Facebooks access was broadened. KH explained that currently every school in Newbury had spaces in their Year 2 and 3 classes but there were more house were being built in the area which may improve pupil numbers.

Income sources **Q** Governors asked if there were any other possible funding sources like selling the excess energy from the solar panels or letting out the hall at the weekends ? **R** KH explained that they were

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	making approximately £15k selling the excess energy. The problem with letting out the school facilities in the holidays was if this coincided with the caretakers being away this would mean the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) would have to cover opening and closing the school, which would increase the pressures on them. **AC&BC** (After School Club & Breakfast Club) **Q** Governors asked what the position was with these clubs ? **R** KH explained that it was pretty good, St Nics was a little less full than St Johns. KH may look into providing a universal BC which could be profitable at St Nics. **High Needs Top Up Funding** Governors noted that last year this had a £62k budget but the spend had been £104k for this year, KH explained that this year income for 2 EHCP children for Reception were included they may not come. Also, another EHCP child had joined mid - year and KB was applying for relevant funding. **Q** Governors asked if the approximate £100k difference was for this year ? KH explained it would be included in the next financial year. **Corporate partnerships** **Q** KD asked if corporate partnerships could be looked at ? **R** KH explained this wouldn't be possible this financial year but possible the next financial year. He didn't have knowledge about this area. KD explained the possible options, including sponsoring newsletters, and highlighted other possibilities in this area. They would need to be with people that were in line with the schools vision. **Action:** KH and KD to discuss the possibilities of corporate partnerships and if governors had any possible contacts to contact KH. **Nursery** JW had been looking at other school's website and noticed that if parents failed to pick up their children at the allocated time, 11.45am, they were charged a £5 to pick them up later. In the past she had run a lunch club with a TA with a 12.15pm pick up time, and suggested it may be worth the school looking into this. The nursery numbers were currently good and it may be worth looking at offering extra hours to cover a later pick up time. SW thanked everyone for their contributions. **Governors approved the 2026/27 budget.**	**KH/KD** **All govs** asap
4.	**Pupil Premium Strategy Statement 2025/26** (4.1 Pupil Premium Strategy December 2025 v2) (4.2 Current numbers 24.4.26.eml) KH apologised for the delay in getting this to governors, the plan was that school's use of pupil premium funding to help improve the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils be number one priority for the FDP (Federation Development Plan) for the next academic year. KH highlighted the fact that disadvantaged children were not doing well and the school would like to work on improving a range of areas including; Writing outcomes and early barriers in Reading for Maths, there was also a problem with attendance levels. Agreeing to the proposed Pupil Premium Strategy Statement meant it could be uploaded onto the website. **Approved.**	
5.	**AOB** (Any Other Business) **Website** MWM asked for governors, who were not regular visitors to the schools, to do a deep dive of the school website, to get in touch with her especially if they were IT savvy, it only needed 2 governors to volunteer to do this. She also noted that the new Ofsted strategy focused on disadvantaged children. SW explained the focus of this meeting had been budget approval, the next meeting would also include policies due for review. (Policies due for review were in the 19.5.26 FGB paperwork file on Governor Hub) Everybody thanked for attending the meeting. Meeting ended at 7.45pm	
	Date of next FGB: Tuesday 19th May 2026 7pm in person at St Johns	

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