

Full Governors Meeting – Wednesday 19th November 2025 starting at 5.30pm – Chestnut Classroom

Minutes

Present: Louise Melia (Chair), Kate Nester (Headteacher), Lucy Shakesby, Sue Court, Neil Howiantz (Vice Chair), Linda Monaghan, Ben Amos

Absent: Michelle Heap, Helen Clark, Mike Sales (Business Manager)

In attendance: Jenny Warrington (Clerk to Governors), Kat Glover (observer), Neill Bird (observer)

The meeting started at 5:36pm.

1. (17/2526) Welcome (including observers) to meeting and apologies received

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including two observers. The governing body accepted apologies from Helen Clark and Michelle Heap. Ben Amos arrived at the meeting at 5.44pm. With 7 of the 9 governors present, the meeting was quorate.

2. (18/2526) Opportunity to declare Pecuniary Interests

None declared.

3. (19/2526) Governance

- Governor vacancy – welcome the observers to the meeting

The governors had time for introductions. Kat Glover is a current parent and Neill Bird has lived in Street for 6 years.

- Confirming governor roles for the academic year

Governor roles for the academic year are detailed in the front the new governance handbook, circulated with the papers for the meeting. Governors agreed to continue with their stated roles. Some new roles were discussed. Neil Howiantz would pick up the pupil premium link governor role, along with the Children Looked After link governor. Sue Court and Louise Melia would become Early Years link governors. This will be pivotal with family hubs starting. The governing body is looking to form a finance committee to support the work of the Business Manager.

Action: To bring a proposal for a Finance Committee to the next meeting

Ben Amos joined the meeting at 5:44pm.

Governors discussed the need for curriculum subject link governors, as they had previously at Hindhayes. It was suggested that there could be a programme of governor subject focused school visits, which several governors could attend at a time, which might take pressure off an individual governor with responsibility for a single subject. For example, it was noted that the curriculum focus has moved in 2025 to inclusion and governors may need to be able to review and explain how the curriculum has been adapted for SEND needs so governors could arrange a school visit looking at the inclusion focus. Governors can show that they are getting along side school staff to find out the issues and become strategic friends. Governor visits could be discussed in staff meetings to raise awareness of the programme, offering openness for the process.

Action: for a programme of governor focus visits to be arranged, with a standard reporting template for the next meeting.

- Register of interests and KCSIE signature sheet to be returned if not already done so.

Some governors need to return the declaration of interests form. The Clerk will email a reminder about this to individual governors. The Headteacher will check the Keeping Safe in Education signature sheets have been returned. Governors who have completed Prevent training at another school/college can send their certificates to the clerk for school records.

Action: complete annual training and paperwork where not done already

4. (20/2526) Headteacher report including attendance and safeguarding

The Headteacher summarised the report that was shared with the governors with the meeting paperwork. She explained for the observers, that she had returned to written reports for 2025, having tried to move away from high levels of paperwork after the 2017 Ofsted inspection. Currently, a written report is felt to have more impact for governors and staff.

Page 2 of the Headteacher Report gave updates for safeguarding. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher have completed their DSL training and the Business Manager is waiting for his training date. The Deputy Headteacher have completed the Transform training around domestic violence. New legislation for children and families ('Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill' and 'Families First Partnership guide') will result in a change for some Somerset guidance documents such as 'LA Effective support'. Somerset has planned a week focuses on sexual abuse at the beginning of December. There were other major themes within the Designated Safeguarding Lead Safeguarding Training, such as child exploitation by older siblings and the need to support new parents, particularly in supporting crying babies.

A governor asked what governors should be aware of in relation to these issues?

The Headteacher said there was an increase in safeguarding issues in school. There are child looked after children in school currently, which there hadn't been for a while. There was a increase in significant complex behaviour.

A governor asked whether the PFSA would be supporting these children/families?

The Headteacher said some of the children would be supported by Family Intervention Service (FIS), or by a Social worker, in these cases the PFSA wouldn't be involved.

It was confirmed that TAS in the report refers to Team Around the School.

Action: The Headteacher will send the School Improvement Partner (SIP) report from Derek Watts with the minutes.

The process for requesting higher level support for a child is through an Early Help request. PFSA are only intended to work with families for six weeks. School experience was the PFSA needed to support some families for a longer time, up to 3 years in some cases. Family Intervention Service staff have very complex cases and don't necessarily have the training behind them to deal with desperate need.



A governor asked how successful the Family Intervention Service is for children and families?

The Headteacher said the FIS support is helpful for families, but it can depend on the match between the FIS worker and the families, sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. Hindhayes has no current cases with the Family Intervention Service. The school is supporting families as best it can, whilst understanding some families need long term living support.

Regarding admissions there isn't too much to report. A few children are starting and a few leaving.

A governor asked when does the school find out the next year's cohort numbers?

The school is given a number in January, but the formal numbers are given at Easter when parents find out.

A governor asked about projected pupil numbers?

Reception was going to be the maximum 60 pupils this academic year but we gradually lost a few children from the cohort due to families moving between application and start date. Year 2s can also transition to KS2 placements before the end of Year 2.

The PFSA will be overseeing attendance. Attendance is a challenging issue and the school's data is below national average. One of the reasons for poor attendance is young children being susceptible to colds and flu. The leadership team continues to monitor and be aspirational. The governors briefly discussed attendance issues, including current percentages and the need to remember behaviour is good. The Headteacher is concerned about the support for transition for children leaving Hindhayes, who have a variable experience after leaving. Visiting parents do ask why Hindhayes isn't an all-through primary school. Hindhayes goes the extra mile, in spite of budgets, to support and meet children at their need point. Families choose Hindhayes for this reason. There are a wealth of primary school offers in the Street area.

The Headteacher mentioned that TOR School outreach programme is a free service supporting Special Education Needs (SEN) in an advisory capacity. TOR outreach will support staff professional development and come to staff meetings and observe children in class, offering strategies, ideas and guidance to the teaching team. It is part of the campaign to avoid exclusions (which can lead to lives of crime and reduced life expectancy) therefore inclusion is the focus.

A governor asked how is Year 1 settling into the year?

Mostly the children are settling into the academic year but there is still challenge in this year group. There was a meeting with the education psychologist to review five children who need support. The school has started the EHCP pathway and has a Assess, Plan, Do, Review (ADPR) programme for one child. Unfortunately, the EHCP process can take 12 months, which means a child in reception may not receive an EHCP until the end of Year 1 or even possibly Year 2.

The Headteacher was excited to share that Hindhayes was investigating being part of the group of schools to open specific county supported SEN Nurture Hub. The suggestion is to develop Willow Room for this specific purpose and a viability process is ongoing with an aim to open the unit for September 2026. It would be led by 1 teacher and 2 Teaching Assistants. The Headteacher visited a SEN Nurture Hub, which is up and running in Burnham on Sea, which supports children with Cognition and learning needs, to see how it was working. Hindhayes would like to have a Communication with Autistic Spectrum Disorder Nurture Hub for a maximum 8 children. There is an expected cost of £200,000 to set the hub up. The current funding for a SEN Nurture Hub child is £26,000. The Headteacher is confident in the school's ability to provide this SEN Nurture Hub to the community. The Headteacher is beginning to speak to staff about

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the possibility of a new SEN Nurture Hub at the school.

A governor asked what guarantees for numbers would there be in the SEND Hub?

The number would be capped at 8. The need across the county for SEND places is high. It would be a stand-alone part of the school, not a drop in for other classes. It also relies on Elmhurst having a hub for KS2 children.

The Headteacher is disappointed with the assessment data shown in the Headteacher's report. The school is focused on supporting children holistically with their learning. There's a new drawing club for reception, which is wonderful to see children engaging with. The leadership team is driving to find answers to the data issues.

The Headteacher gave a brief summary of the current staffing issues. The teaching moves for September have been positive with Early Years having a new lease of energy. The long standing caretaker is leaving in December and the school is looking for the replacement alternatives. The Business Manager has had compassionate leave since half term holiday.

A governor asked to clarify the acronyms in the SEN Section of the Headteacher report:

SPCL – Speech, Communication and Language Needs

SEMH – Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs

LC – Learning and Cognition Need

PD – Physical Disability

ASC – Autistic Spectrum Condition

A governor asked about risk management – is there a risk register?

The Business Manager has the risk register. The Budget is a key issue. The school has been working diligently to find solutions. The Local Authority could not suggest any recommendations.

5. (21/2526) Safeguarding

The safeguarding update was included within the Headteacher Report above (20/2526).

6. (22/2526) Re-visiting the issue of Wellbeing and Leave of Absence

The Chair of Governors reminded the meeting that they had discussed the issue of Wellbeing Days last academic year and they had said that they would revisit the issue. The Chair asked the Headteacher how staff morale was currently. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher gave their views on staff morale. Issues include: being a skeleton staff, individual staff members covering several roles, some staff anxiety about their ability to do their jobs and their need to be reassured and supported. The meeting discussed the idea of not assigning children to their reception class until October half term, to allow the children to find their best fit, in time. There has been early start to illness this term, which has affected staff as well as children. The wellbeing of all staff and the leadership team is important to the governors. There was recently a Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) school fayre event which was worth so much more than the £750 raised in funds.

The Chair of Governors explained that the school has staff Wellbeing Days, in which staff can book a full day to do something for their wellbeing which is covered by the staff team. There has been a problem last academic year with staff making arrangements for their Wellbeing Day before the Headteacher has had the request or consented to the date. A letter about the Wellbeing Day is emailed to staff. Staff should not make

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arrangements before they receive consent from the Headteacher or Business Manager. Wellbeing Days are single full days away from school, they cannot be split into multiple session. There is positive feedback from the Wellbeing Days.

Separate to Wellbeing Days is the issue of Leave of Absence, which is detailed in the Leave of Absence policy and is where staff request leave from work for specific reasons by completing and submitting a form to the leadership team. It is the Headteacher's responsibility to consent to leave of absence requests and to make arrangements for cover in that situation.

Action: Headteacher to share Wellbeing Day's letter with Chair of Governors

Action: Leave of Absence form to be reviewed and policy to be shared with staff and governors.

7. (23/2526) Finance update – The Business Manager has sent his apologies for this meeting but will send a summary by email between meetings.

8. (24/2526) Skills Audit – this item was postponed to the next meeting in January due to time constraints.

9. (25/2526) Governors Handbook - this item was postponed to the next meeting in January due to time constraints.

10. (26/2526) Sounds Write Learning Walk feedback

The document was circulate with the paperwork for this meeting. Email the Vice-Chair if you have any questions and this item can brought again to the next meeting in January.

11. (27/2526) Policies to be agreed:

No policies were approved by governors at this meeting.

The Critical Incident Planning policy has been updated to change staff involved with the critical incident management but still needs further review. It will be brought back to the next meeting.

The Deputy Head notes that several policies that cover the large area of Critical Incident Planning and other policies which are not due for review should be considered in relation to this issue, including Health and Safety and Fire and Evacuation policies.

An observer to the meeting asked whether there was a Cascade tree detailed in the Critical Incident Planning policy and whether the school had practiced a lock down annually?

Hindhayes does have a communication tree.

It has been difficult to plan for lockdown. There is a separate lock down alert and staff can practice the procedure.

Other policies that the Deputy Headteacher noted had been updated, but didn't need governor approval, are:

- Charging and Remissions - updated to include voluntary contributions to Forest School.
- Changing for Forest School and PE - no changes
- Volunteers in School - no changes
- Attendance
- Mental Health and Wellbeing

Pay policy – to follow to next meeting.

The school's Policy Review Chart was shared with Governors for reference.



12. (28/2526) Minutes of the last Meeting (24th September 2025) to be approved

The Minutes of the of the full governing body meeting of 24th September 2025 was approved without amendment.

13. (29/2526) Action points from previous meeting

One action point remains to be added to the next agenda.

14. (30/2526) Any other Urgent Business - To be emailed to the chair before the meeting.

None

15. (31/2526) Governor School Visits and Training

None shared with the meeting.

16. (32/2526) Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the full governing body will be on Wednesday 21st January 2026 at 5:30pm in Chestnut Classroom.

The meeting ended at 7:33pm

Agenda item	Action by	Agreed Action	Update for next meeting
5/2526	JW	School Development Plan to be on next governing body agenda.	
19/2526	Chair/Vice- Chair/Head	Governor Visit schedule and report template to be brought to next meeting	
19/2526	Chair/Vice-Chair	Proposal to form a Finance Committee and Terms of Office for next meeting	
19/2526	All governors/Clerk	Return Declaration of Interests if not already done. Return the confirmation that you have read KCSIE signature sheets to Headteacher if not done. Send PREVENT certificates to Clerk.	
20/2526	Headteacher	Send the SIP report to governors	
22/2526	Headteacher/Business Manager	Headteacher to share Wellbeing Day's letter with Chair of Governors	
22/2526	Leadership Team / Chair/Vice-Chair/Clerk	Leave of Absence form to be reviewed and policy to be shared with staff and governors.	

A. Mellor

Signed by Vice Chair of Governors

Date: 21.01.26

L. Mellis