

Governing Board

Agenda & Minutes



Date 25 th November 2025	Time 6pm	Location St Thomas'
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<p>Member Present</p> <p>Paul Davies (HT)</p> <p>Chris McGowan</p> <p>Gemma Duff</p> <p>Lynsey Cooper</p> <p>Jo Jones</p> <p>Fiona Ashworth</p> <p>In attendance:</p> <p>Kathryn Knapp</p> <p>Sarah Allchurch (clerk)</p>	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Nicola Weeks</p> <p>Danny Millington</p> <p>Lisa Rodrigues</p> <p>Jo Lubbers</p> <p>Jon Strefford</p> <p>Meeting was quorate.</p> <p>Meeting started at 6.05pm.</p>
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TOPIC	NOTES
1. Welcome and Opening Prayer, Apologies	Welcome from the Chair and a prayer from FA in LR's absence. Apologies from NW, DM, LR, JS and JL.
2. Pecuniary interests	None.
3. Minutes from previous meeting (2 nd October 2025)	Approved.
4. Chair's comments	The Chair thanked the SLT and staff at both schools for all their efforts in dealing with the incident at the infants a couple of weeks ago when the adjacent field flooded and

	<p>the school was without water and had to close. All pupils were transferred to the juniors for the day, which was no mean feat. It was a perfect example of the federation working well together.</p>
<p>5. Headteacher's report (written)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from LLPR • Education Catering update • SBN update • Ecchinswell update • Staffing update/wellbeing 	<p>A written report would normally have been issued for the first FGB, but was not, so HT has prepared a written report for this meeting instead and this was shared with governors ahead of the meeting.</p> <p><u>LLPR</u></p> <p>The LLPR took place at the junior school today and HT was very pleased with it; the school is in the strongest place it has been since the SLT joined together. HT noted a difference from last year, there being a lot more leadership capacity this year; there were some staffing issues at the infants last year which took time to resolve, but KK, JJ, Tom and Caroline really stepped up in their leadership roles and proved a great team. The LLP had not seen a difference in leadership capacity from last year, despite HT's absence, which is testament to the good work of the SLT. The next Ofsted is 18 months away, and HT wants to make some real progress on strategic decisions before then.</p>

HT summed up some of the positives from the LLPR ahead of the written report:

There is a clear progression in books; a strong learning environment and cleanness to the working environment; scaffolding being used well by teachers who are aware of the need to reduce this through the year; a good SEN focus; good use of additional staff; a good overall perception of staff.

Next steps to work on include: a focus on spelling in books: 'cuspy' children are making repeated errors which are not being picked up on and are becoming engrained. A zero-tolerance approach is perhaps needed here.

Safeguarding training and practices are very good, but it might be beneficial to think about how the kitchen staff and cleaners get their safeguarding updates.

The LLP complimented the maths and English leads, who have clear views on how to develop further. Praise was also given to the family support worker. Overall, safeguarding is strong, and the children felt safe.

Children spoke knowledgably about history, geography and art.



Q: What is scaffolding?

It is the tools to enable children to work independently on a task, e.g. a word map. Scaffolding is broken away through the year encouraging independent learning.

Q: How do we put this feedback into action? Is there an action plan?

Yes. There is already an existing programme in place, which now needs to be reviewed and tweaked following the LLPR feedback. It is all about establishing systems for setting high expectations.

The monitoring plan for next term is English to be carried out by GD, and she could include these feedback points.

The year 4 multiplication is still below the national average, therefore this needs to be monitored.

The seating arrangements were commented upon, as the LLP did not like the children sitting in rows, but as JJ stated, this sometimes needs to be done to ensure the children are focused and not distracted by each other.

Education Catering

The option of continuing to charge the current cost of meals (£3.20) was

previously discussed, although the new provider would be charging £2.75 per meal. This would allow for any increase in cost down the line as well as the costs of kitchen repairs and maintenance. However, EFS has since confirmed that schools must charge the actual cost of the meal and £2.75 per meal was written on the menu. This is not an ideal situation, as the school will therefore need to pass on any increase in price to parents in the future. However, the payment previously being made towards the SLA is now not being paid, so there is a slight saving there.

SBN

Things are moving quickly. A process took place to recruit a leader of the SBN who would liaise with the SLT and working party and who would be responsible for the ethos and approach of the SBN in conjunction with Year R. It would be a two-term project and appointment, and Stacey Macdonald has been successfully appointed. She has some great ideas, and she is keen for prospective parents to come in and look at Year R, which would be a strong selling point for selling the nursery to the local community. She could then show them the classroom where the

nursery will be (Owls) and outline the plans for the outdoor space. Registration will open next week. Some literature around the SBN is being drawn up for prospective parents to view; they will not be signing up blind. There will be a non-refundable registration fee payable. Places will be offered initially to children aged three and four, with the intention that children from the age of two will be welcome from September 2026.

Elisha will move out of Owls into the current library, which will become the new year 1 Owls class, and the library will move to Badgers class. The entrance and outside space for the SBN will be accessed through the side door of Owls. There will be defined session times and pricing structure; Gary Larcombe is currently running the numbers to get a more accurate picture of the running costs. Once this has been done, this will be sent to the working party for review and consideration. Opening and closing times might need to be aligned with Quackers which closes at 6pm every day and costs £17.50 for an afternoon session. The government gives parents 30 free hours of childcare per week for children from 9 months up to the age of 4.

Fundraising will be needed to raise funds for the internal resources for the SBN. The Chair has agreed to be Father Christmas at the Christmas fair on 17th December and hopefully the fair will raise a good amount.

The previous pre-school has confirmed they will not be giving the school any of their assets or resources. The outside space for the SBN will be funded by using some of the sports premium, and the staffing costs will be paid for out of the main school budget and reimbursed. The internal resources will not incur huge cost as Stacey's vision is more of open-ended play in the style of a Montessori. Items can also be sourced from charity shops or donated. A GoFundMe fundraiser could also be set up for this project, which will include the purchase of lino flooring and a fridge freezer and nappy changing facilities, amongst other items. A local handyman will also be sought to help with the internal resources.

Q: How much will the registration fee be?

£50, non-refundable. £25 if a part-time place. There is room for discussion on this though.



Q: Will the 30 free hours offered by the government be for term time only or will they be spread across 50 weeks?

This is yet to be decided.

Attendance and Behaviour

a) Attendance

HT recently attended a briefing on attendance in which it was confirmed that the government will be issuing all schools with ABIEs (Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectations).

The target for the juniors is 96.9% attendance (currently 96.8%) and the target for the infants is 96.1% (currently 97%). These statistics are for the period from September 2025 to date. Although these seem tiny decimals of difference, a small difference has a big impact, as each child has two attendances a day. If targets are missed, it may be the case that attendance at various activities around this will be required. HT will be writing to parents about the importance of their children being at school.

b) Behaviour

There was a big increase in behaviour incidents at St Thomas' last year, but so far

	<p>this term, there has been a big decrease. There have been seven incidents since the start of term until 17th November compared with 46 for the same period last year. We are now back to where we were before this increase. These incidents concern physical contact child-to-child, as well as disruptive behaviour.</p> <p>Q: Is there any reason for this improvement?</p> <p>One child has now moved to year 3 at the juniors and has had an excellent start to the year, haven been given lunchtime provision, which has proved motivational in improving his behaviour. Another child has simply improved his behaviour.</p> <p>At the juniors, there were 27 incidents in the period since the start of term to date - three were severe and two resulted in exclusion – compared to an identical number last year, of which seven were severe. The majority of these were in year 3, perhaps because of adjusting to the new setting.</p> <p>(See confidential minutes for further discussions.)</p>
6. Committee Update	a) Resourcing

- a. Resourcing and Compliance
 - Policies to review: AI Policy and H&S Policy
 - Approve revised budgets and 3-year plans
- b. Teaching & Learning
- c. Safeguarding

Policies

AI and H&S policies were both approved by the GB on the recommendation of DM.

Budgets

LC ran through the budgets and the budget review she had prepared for governors. Detailed discussions around the budgets had taken place at the recent resourcing meeting.

By the end of year 3, both schools show sizeable deficits which will have to be carefully managed. There is not much that can be done at this stage, but hopefully, the SBN and savings on the catering might make a difference. The GB is aware of the deficit and has a long-term plan to rectify it. The Chair is satisfied that the GB is doing everything it can, and nothing is being wasted.

The revised budget and the 3-year plans were approved and signed by the Chair, for submission by the end of November.

Asset register review

LC went through the asset register review she had prepared for governors. In short, there is no fixed asset register. The exercise was last done in 2019 by an

external company, and since then, this has not been updated.

PAT testing identified some assets, but the asset numbers in the ICT did not match this. If a flood or fire happened, there would be no correct record, and this must be addressed. A renewed policy needs to be introduced. It is very difficult to reconcile the 2019 audit with what is there now. How this project is carried out needs to be discussed. Perhaps DW and HM can take charge of it and each teacher can do a stock-take in their own classroom.

b) T&L

GD and FA met Tom to do a maths learning walk; he had arranged the day so well and there were so many positives to take away from it. Tom has already stepped into his new role brilliantly. GD will write up the report and send out to governors. Tom has carried out some planning with Lauren at infants to ensure she continues in the Woolton Hill way. The maths statement has been updated to reflect the switch from the White Rose approach to the new spiral curriculum to ensure continuous provision. It is important that coverage is happening in each year, especially around recall.

Timetables need to be improved, especially for years 3 and 4. Mini maths is used for years 5 and 6. The use of AI is also being introduced as a way of creating questions to challenge students.

Overall, engagement and task design on the learning walk was excellent; GD (greater depth) is better, but still being developed, especially at the infants; staff are being deployed efficiently, planning using HIAS models is good; there is also consistency in activities and effective SEN support. There is some discrepancy with how maths is taught between leadership teams and individual teachers, but this will be resolved. FA focused on the SEN aspect of the visit. Children were building models at the juniors and using counters to count at the infants. Breakaway groups helped to embed knowledge.

Alison was very impressed with the governor monitoring at the LLPR visit today. FA's explanation of how the monitoring is carried out really added to the value of the visit. FA also carried out an RE visit last week with a focus on SEN.

There will be a T&L data drop at the end of the week, followed by a week of moderation and a week of pupil progress

	<p>meetings. The year 6 mock raw scores were not as high as had been hoped, but hopefully this was down to nerves on the day. Retesting takes place in January. The next T&L committee meeting is in mid-January, but the tests may not have been carried out by then.</p> <p>c) Safeguarding</p> <p>NW was not at the meeting, so could not provide an update, but she has an appointment in the dairy to meet HM to look through the SCR. The one safeguarding incident has already been discussed.</p>
<p>7. AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GB Development Plan 	<p>Chair has used the HCC model to create a GB development plan. Most of the contents are already in place and carried out effectively, but it is good to have a plan in place to ensure GB monitoring is done and performance reviewed throughout the year. The one area that needs to be put in place is an induction pack or programme for new governors. Chair will look into this.</p> <p>ACTION.</p> <p>A previous parent governor recruitment drive did not result in any interest. An advert will be put in the next newsletter to try again. A foundation governor is also needed, and FA will talk to LR again about this. ACTION.</p>

<p>8. Next meeting(s)</p> <p>FGB 28th January 2026 – 6pm, WHJS</p> <p>14th January 2026 T&L/Pay – St Thomas’</p> <p>12th March 2026 Resources 9.30am – WHJS</p>	<p>WGB training 5th January 2026.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 7.43pm.</p>
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