

Governing Board

Agenda & Minutes



Date 26th March 2025	Time 6pm	Location St Thomas'
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Let Your Light Shine

Matthew 5

We believe in a child focused approach which aims to challenge, support and engage all pupils and their families from our community

We offer exciting learning opportunities to unleash the creative minds of our school community

We aspire to create the minds of the future through innovation, passion and enthusiasm

Member Present Paul Davies Chris McGowan Gemma Duff Jo Jones Jo Lubbers Alice Maclean Jonathan Strefford Nicola Weeks Fiona Ashworth Lisa Rodrigues In Attendance: Kathryn Knapp Sarah Allchurch (clerk)	Apologies Lynsey Cooper Danny Millington Quorate: yes
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TOPIC	NOTES

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer, Apologies	Meeting started at 6.05pm. LR opened the meeting in prayer. Apologies accepted from LC and DM. Welcome from Chair.
2. Pecuniary interests	No pecuniary interests declared.
3. Minutes from previous meeting	Approved. (Minutes from 30 th January 2025)
4. Chairman's comments	The Chair thanked the teachers, support staff and governors for an excellent LLPR visit last month. It was a great bill of health for the school and governing body. Well done to everyone.
5. Headteacher's report (verbal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education Catering update ● School sites discussion ● Class structures for 2025 	<p>LLPR:</p> <p>Not a lot to say at present as the report has not yet been received. As soon as it is, it will be distributed for discussion at the next meeting.</p> <p>Education Catering:</p> <p>It is 12 months until the LA caterers cease trading. The school has opted to go for the LA brokered option. HT put his name down to be part of the group negotiating the contract and as a result, he is positive the right decision has been made and that the school will get a good deal from it. The spec will be published to companies after Easter, the tender process runs through the summer term,</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates against the FIP 	<p>onboarding will start in Autumn, with a view to all schools being onboard by January 2026, a term before the LA option ceases.</p> <p>Updates against FIP:</p> <p>Maths will be the key improvement focus until September. The maths manager delivered inset training for KS1 and KS2 groups, which some governors also attended. KS2 was given more focus as it was agreed that activities in KS1 required more practical-based elements and aspects of intervention. Year 6 books are looked at by a moderator. EYFS lead delivered a separate group training for early years. Positive training sessions which all received positive feedback from teachers in terms of enhancing their teaching practices, allowing them to apply the training in practice in pairs and monitor each other and give feedback. There will be a follow-up meeting in the third week after Easter and feedback given after that.</p> <p>Further training has been given by the English manager on GD and pen portraits have been used to help achieve this.</p> <p>Q: How are pen portraits developed?</p> <p>Caroline attends meetings with other professionals in the area as well as looking closely at the books and merging the two in order to aim at GD.</p> <p>Alarm bells were raised when a book which was said to be at GD by a teacher actually was not GD according to the</p>
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English manager. It is very important that books are assessed accurately.

Q: What can be done to avoid this?

A moderator was sourced to meet with the year 6 team and the English manager to look at all books. Books will likely be moderated in June. It is therefore better to find out now what needs focus and what is accurate and not.

Some pupils are not quite there with GD at present but will need to be in June. Spelling and punctuation should be a particular focus.

Preparation for SIAMS continues. HT is confident RE is being adequately focused on at school. The junior school participates in worship and reflection areas at both schools are established. LR leads worship at both schools. Shrove Tuesday was celebrated at St Thomas' and Good Friday at the Juniors. A Hindu workshop was given to KS1.

Art workshops were also carried out and a book will be going to the publisher, and every family will receive a copy.

The Federation plans to apply for the Global Neighbours Bronze award which will support the SIAMS inspection.

Diversity training was also done. There were two training sessions and pupils from years 4, 5 and 6 took part.

Twelve schools came together for this training and the children came back with activities to share and relay to the school. The Gender Stereotypes training was also well received. There will be two further sessions next term on

Global Links, which teaches about links to other languages, cultures and countries.

Assessment is being developed in foundation subjects. Not just English and Maths. The strategic overview and objectives are widespread, so it is impossible to assess all pupils in all areas. Progression of skills is key.

Q: How do you sample assessments to capture this progression?

The four most essential pieces of information are looked at, which are substantive, and knowledge based.

Q: How confident are you that this approach assesses overall ability?

Very. The only subject that cannot be assessed using this four-pronged strategy is Science as there is too much information to process. Teachers will be given an assessment pack to focus on in their inset training day. A system is in place and now needs to be followed.

Assessment needs to be carried out regularly every term and repeated until the knowledge is embedded.

Q: When will assessments take place?

Assessments this term will be done by the end of next week before term ends. Essentially, different skills are assessed at different times. Skill will be assessed within a lesson whereas knowledge recall will be assessed at a later stage once knowledge is embedded. Pupils will be given plenty of opportunity for knowledge recall, including

flashback activities in class, which can be used year on year.

Another area for development is ensuring all subject leaders have a clear vision as to what constitutes differentiation and variation in each subject, so this is evident by the time the next OFSTED inspection is carried out, likely in two years. A full strategy plan will be put in place with the help of the Chair and GD.

Class structures for 2025:

Next year, there will be 3 classes at St Thomas' and 5 at Juniors. Year R (Hedgehogs) will have 23 pupils on current numbers although this might be higher if other schools are oversubscribed. See separate minute.

School sites discussion:

See separate minute.

Update on general staff wellbeing:

The Educational Psychologist, Amber, led a training session with the staff. A positive staff meeting followed up on this, in which the relevant values were worked on. The mental health surveys were also very positive. The mental health team has lots of new recruits and pupil ambassadors. This has been incorporated into inset days to allow for focus on the topic. Team dynamics seem to

	<p>be good. It was noted that the last session with Amber was not fully booked which can be seen as positive progress. LR said she is available for a chat anytime. It was agreed that staff wellbeing would be put on the agenda as a standing item from now on. ACTION.</p>
6. Web filtering	<p>HT tightened up procedures and policies in relation to web filtering. Harrap has blocked Wikipedia. A balance is being sought between educating and keeping pupils safe. Research is being done, and teachers will check any websites they use first before allowing pupils access to them. They will be mindful of screen content.</p>
7. PAN application	<p>The schools applied for a reduction in PAN numbers from 45 to 30 as from September 2026. This has been approved and will be written into the school website as part of the admissions policy. A temporary PAN reduction will be applied from September 2025 to allow for a start in reducing numbers.</p>
<p>8. Committee Update</p> <p>a. Resourcing and Compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies to review: none for this meeting 	<p>Resourcing:</p> <p>SFVS documents need approval at FGB. They were approved at resources committee. See below.</p> <p>Budgets continue to be a challenge. HM has been doing an amazing job as SBM and covering reception at St Thomas', but this is getting harder for her to do, as there is more work to cover. She is reluctant to get cover and incur the cost of this to the school. In the balance for the current year, 80% of budget goes on salaries. The rest is premiums, such as the sports premium, which are paid out. The model works for 30 children per class. When numbers are down, it causes financial issues. HM is</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of Harrap quote for ICT upgrade b. Teaching & Learning c. Safeguarding 	<p>managing ok, although shortly she will need to prepare the budget which will require a lot of time dedicated to it. She has been quite stretched and has compromised her wellbeing. Debbie's return date will be known soon hopefully. HM has been spending more time at St Thomas' to catch up on work, as disturbances are fewer, but overall, it has had a knock-on effect on other staff and is not sustainable.</p> <p>Harrap quote:</p> <p>The quote from Harrap for an ICT upgrade is to replace the servers which are both at the end of their life. Windows 10 is no longer viable, and a transfer to Windows 11 is necessary. Going forward, there will only be one server at the junior school, which significantly cuts the cost of the upgrade. The only downside is that if there is a power cut at the juniors, the phones and internet will go down at both schools, but worth the risk to save on cost. The schools are locked in with Harrap as the IT provider and they offer good value for money in any case. The installation will begin on Monday 28th April 2025. The money will come from the capital budget. The cost has turned out to be more than was budgeted for.</p> <p>Pupil devices also need to be updated, and this is not included in the quote. The cost of 30 new laptops and 30 new tablets for each school (120 devices in total) will be approximately £30k.</p> <p>Q: What evidence is there that these devices are necessary in supporting English and maths?</p>
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They are needed to deliver the computing curriculum. They are not the core tool used to teach but the National Curriculum needs to be followed. They are used for intervention and to enhance other bits of the curriculum and for the ICT syllabus. The school is currently in discussions with the PTA as to whether they can help fund the purchase of these new devices.

The quote was approved.

Teaching and Learning:

After the data drop, it is evident there are issues in the year 3 cohort. Boosters are taking place this term which have received good feedback. No update on the year 6 mock SATs yet, but this will take place after the Easter break. Year 1 is a high-needs cohort. Phonics preparation for phonics screening is underway. SEND data shows good progress and good progress has been made in writing.

Maths monitoring is underway, and English monitoring will be revisited with Caroline in the summer term. JL and FA will be doing a learning walk with GD on 21st May. There is also a staff meeting coming up to raise any issues and concerns.

Safeguarding:

NW gave a written report to HT from her last visit, which is yet to be approved. A bullying incident concerning two pupils in year 2 has been resolved and measures put in place have been effective in making the victim feel safe. There have been no further incidents.

	<p>Q: Have there been any exclusions since the report?</p> <p>See separate minute.</p>
9. ICT update	Covered above.
10. Purchasing card process review	LC and HM reviewed the processes around the purchasing card. There are two cards, one for DW and one for HM, although at the moment HM has both. Two cards are necessary as there are two systems. Only HM and DW can use the cards. The cards are mainly used for Amazon transactions, about 30 transactions a month. HT then approves the spend on the cards by logging into the system and going through all the transactions. DW and HM cannot log in on the system.
11. SFVS approval	Both documents were approved subject to a couple of small amendments, namely changing SIP to FIP wherever mentioned. Chair will come into school to sign both documents once these amendments have been made and they will then be submitted.
12. AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay panel meetings 	<p>As the new pay policy has scrapped performance management, the pay panel responsibilities have become more of a formality and a rubber-stamping exercise, although the panel still needs to meet twice a year.</p> <p>It has been proposed that the pay panel be tagged on to the end of the T & L committee which meets more regularly than resourcing. Teaching staff and FA who is on HTPM panel would have to step out of the T & L meeting for this part. (Teachers have to apply to move to a new pay scale as a new job but once on the new scale, they move through it if they meet the required standard of the</p>

	<p>job. There are only two SLT positions on the senior leadership scale, being HT and KK. School budget does not play any part in progression of a teacher through a pay scale, therefore 30 children in each class is needed to offset a teacher's salary.) JL and NW are on the pay panel.</p> <p>It was agreed that a change in the structure of the T & L meetings to include the pay panel would be put on the agenda for the next T & L meeting and approved. ACTION.</p>
<p>13. Next meeting(s)</p> <p>21st May 2025 6-8pm at St Thomas'</p> <p>10th July 2025 6-8pm at WHJS</p>	<p>The next FGB has been moved to a week later to allow for the next data drop. GD will be Chair as Chair is away.</p> <p>Chair thanked the GB and reminded everyone of the screen-free training session on 28th April which is on the school website. Meeting ended at 8.03pm.</p>

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

ACTION	TO BE ACTIONED BY	AGENDA ITEM
1. Staff wellbeing will be put on the agenda as a standing item from now on	Clerk	5
2. A change in structure of the T&L committee meetings to include pay panel will be put on the next T&L agenda	Clerk	8