



Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting held on Monday 23rd February 2026 on MS Teams

Present:

Parent Governor (2): Kirsty Largent, Lu Farr-Smith

LA Governor (1): Leena Clark,

HT and Staff Governor (2): Sarah Gray (HT)

Foundation Governors (8):

DBE Appointed (2): Julia Hughes (Co-chair 01.10.2026), David Laird (Co-chair 01.10.2026)

Ex Officio (1): Revd Jonathan Gordon

PCC Appointed (5): David White

Co-Opted Governor (1): Sarah Morris

Associate Governors: Larry Eaton, Scott Wallberg

In attendance: Tracey Middleton, Clerk to Governors, Laura Zimet, Deputy Headteacher, Liz O'Hare

Absent:

Foundation Governors (8): Phil Anderson

HT and Staff Governor (2): Sarah Stewart (staff)

Documentation circulated in advance:

St Mary's CofE Primary School FGB Agenda 23.02.26	12. Reception Allocation Ranking for September 2026
	12. Schools_financial_value_standard_SFVS_checklist_2025_to_2026 v3
8. Policies to approve FGB Feb. 2026	13. Annual Safeguarding Audit 2025-26
3. Confirmations-Summary-St Mary's CofE Primary School, Northchurch	13. Termly Safeguarding Report to Governors Spring 2026.doc
3. Register-of-interests-St Mary's CofE Primary School, Northchurch	14. Training-StMarysPrimarySchool
6. Draft meeting minutes (policies) 08.01	February 2026 Newsletter (1)
6. Draft minutes 15.12	Headteacher's report to the Governing Body Febraury 2026.docx
12. Link visit reports	RE, Spirituality & Collective Worship

SignedDated:

The core functions of the governing body are as set out in (regulation 6) and include, but are not limited to ensuring:

- that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined
- that the headteacher performs their responsibilities for the educational performance of the school
- the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources

A governing body and its governors must, as required by The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013, regulation 6(2):

- act with integrity, objectivity and honesty and in the best interests of the school
- be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take and shall be prepared to explain their decisions and actions to interested parties
- The governing body also has legislative responsibility and strategic oversight for the school's safeguarding arrangements.

1 Welcome and prayer:

1. The meeting was opened with a prayer
2. The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting
3. The Chair noted that the meeting is quorate

2 To receive apologies for absence and to consider approving any absences:

1. Colleagues were reminded that notification of absence from a meeting should be forwarded to the clerk, Chair and Head at least 3 days in advance of the meeting and that it is the decision of the Board whether to approve an absence. Governors/Trustees are being increasingly held to account for their commitment and capacity to attend meetings regularly, with schools now required to publish this information on their websites
2. Apologies were received and absence accepted from: Phil Anderson, Sarah Stewart

3 Confidentiality and to declare any Conflict of Interest from any items on the agenda and confirm if any new declarations require adding to the register:

1. Colleagues were reminded that if a governor/trustee, or anyone else present, has a conflict of interest on an agenda item(s) – pecuniary or other, they must declare it and voluntarily withdraw from the meeting for that item(s) and not take part in that discussion. It is for individual governors/trustees to declare a conflict and voluntarily withdraw and not for another governor/trustee to instruct withdrawal
2. None declared
3. Colleagues were reminded to add any new declarations to the statutory register which is recorded in GHUB and published on the school website and alert the governance professional and Chair of any updates
4. None declared
5. Colleagues were reminded that if any colleague has received any gifts or hospitality, it should be recorded on the statutory register
6. None declared
7. Colleagues were reminded that any RPTs must be recorded

4 To consider notification of any items for AOB:

1. None

5 Spirituality and Religious Education at St Mary's:

The HT introduced the presentation. Further discussion and questions elicited that:

1. Governors agreed that this is a strength of the school and the vision is demonstrated across all areas of the school
2. An overview of the strategic purpose, compliance, leadership and monitoring, collective worship, defining spirituality, strategic assurance
3. The link governor is visiting the school next week and a link visit report will be circulated
4. Governors debated their understanding the school setting and how our pupils are provided for and that the recent collective worship monitoring provided assurance
5. Thanks were extended to staff for the interesting and informative presentation

The Board noted the update

6 To agree minutes of the last meeting: (previously circulated):

1. The minutes of the meeting dated **15.12.2025 and 08.01.2026** which were circulated in advance of the meeting were agreed as an accurate record; signed and dated by the Chair and added to the school files
2. It was noted that the signed copy of the minutes must be kept indefinitely. They must be held at the school for a period of six years, after which they can be sent to archive

7 To consider matters arising from the last meeting's minutes:

1. The matters arising from the last meeting's minutes were considered and it was agreed that all actions are closed or in hand or on the current agenda

8 Policy approval:

1. HfL and HCC models have been used where possible
2. The Admissions Policy and determined arrangements were agreed as recommended by the Admissions Committee
3. The TOIL Policy is not currently used and no longer relevant and it was agreed that it will be retired and not replaced
4. Page 4 of the statement on behaviour typo corrected
5. The Accessibility policy will be further reviewed - Kirsty and Sarah
6. The Tenancy Policy and Tenancy Agreement was discussed and will be further discussed and approved by Resources Committee
7. The following policies which were circulated in advance of the meeting were ratified

CM012	Special Educational Needs & Disability
CM021	Relationships, Health and Sex Education
F0006	Dinner Money
GB007	Operation of CCTV

PC003	Relationship and Positive Behaviour
PC003a	Governing Board Statement on Behaviour Policy Guiding Principles
PC006	Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions
PC022	Allergy Management Policy
PM004	Whistleblowing
PM010	Capability
PM016	Grievance
PM035	Time Off for Dependents
PM037	Career Break
PR003	Accessibility
PM012	Disciplinary
CM009	Religious Education
CM003	Spirituality Policy
CM 002	Collective Worship
PC024	School Uniform
1. CM004	EYFS

The Board noted the update

9 Governor Strategy Discussion – roles and responsibilities:

- David White's term of office ends on 04.03.2026 – thanks extended to him for his long tenure at the school
- Phil Anderson will be resigning – **ACTION: date to be advised**
- The Chair of Standards and Ethos was agreed to be Lu Farr Smith
- The link governor for phonics was agreed to be David Laird
- The Resources Committee membership was agreed
- The Christian distinctiveness lead to be filled, colleagues to express their interest to the chair
- ACTION: Websites, GHUB, subscriptions, GIAS and databases to be updated accordingly**

JH

SG

The Board noted the update

10 School Development Plan and School Self Evaluation:

The HT introduced the documentation circulated in advance of the meeting. Further questions and discussion elicited that:

- The SDP was reviewed for progress against each priority and the evidence and impact noted
- Governors agreed that good progress was being made and that monitoring of progress and achievement has had a positive impact
- CPD continues to be invested in as reflected in practice and policies

JG left the meeting at 20.00

The Board noted the update

11 To receive and ask questions of the HT report:

The HT introduced the documentation circulated in advance of the meeting. Further questions and discussion elicited that:

1. The school context was reviewed

Pupil numbers on roll: 224 (including Nursery)
 EYF: 240 (236 with 26 nursery cap)
 Leavers Spring 2026
 1 - Siblings relocated to Hemel Hempstead (Year 4 and Nursery)
 1 - new child joined Reception

Year Group numbers

	Nursery	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2024	24	30	28	26	29	30	30	24
2025	18	30	30	27	30	30	30	30
2026	22	27	30	30	27	29	29	30

SEN numbers

	Nursery	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2024	2	3	3	10	6	8	4	3
2025	2	4	4	3	11	6	9	6
2026	0	2	5	4	6	9	6	12

2024 - 39/221 = 18% of pupils on roll

2025 - 45/225 = 20% of pupils on roll

2026 - 44/224 = 20% of pupils on roll

EHCPs (Education, Health and Care Plan)

- 3 current
- 1 submitted awaiting response
- 3 to be submitted by Easter
- 2 to be submitted by end of Summer Term

2. Attendance was monitored

Attendance

	2026	2025	2024
Whole School Attendance	95.5%	94.9%	94.9%
Authorised Absence	4.1%	4.3%	4.3%
Unauthorised	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%
Persistent Absentees <90%	26	18	24
Severely Absent	1	3	3
Reduced Timetables	1	3	3

	Spring 2026	Spring 2025	Spring 2024
Nursery (non-statutory)	96%	92%	94%
Reception	96%	96%	96%
Year 1	97%	97%	96%
Year 2	96%	95%	91%
Year 3	96%	91%	94%
Year 4	94%	96%	94%
Year 5	95%	95%	94%
Year 6	95%	95%	97%

- There have been no notifiable accidents
- 1 Operation Encompass referral has been received this term
- There has been 1 low level notifiable breach. Termly DPO visits continue to take place and actions completed.
- 1 SAR O FIOs

7. Behaviour - There have been 3 suspensions this term (2 children). There have been 2 internal suspensions this term (1 child), There have been no racist incidents reported. There have been no sexist incidents reported. 0 homophobic incident was reported. There have been 0 allergy incidents. Child on child abuse - There have been no further incidents involving the child whose behaviour was classified as bullying. We continue to monitor and support behaviour closely.
8. Complaints - There has been one formal complaint. The complaint was partially upheld in relation to SAR. This is being addressed.

Pupil progress and attainment

The pupil progress data collection process has been strengthened this term to provide a clearer analysis of attainment for both vulnerable and non-vulnerable groups. This has improved our ability to identify trends, highlight emerging gaps, and target areas requiring further intervention or support.

All teaching staff have been actively involved in this process, ensuring shared ownership of outcomes and a consistent understanding of pupil progress across the school.

Statutory tests

No Statutory tests have taken place this half term. Prediction for upcoming test are as follows:

- EYFS - 70% GLD
- KS1 Phonics Screening - 80%
- Year 4 Multiplication Check - 63% secure
- KS2
 - 70% on track or above for reading
 - 60% on track or above for Maths
 - 60% on track or above for Writing

KS2 SATs week 11th-14th May - We would be grateful for any Governor support with invigilating.

Sports Premium

The school will receive the Sports Premium of £17,265 in the academic year 2025-2026. It has been allocated as follows.

£6,500 - CPD for staff
 £9,260 - Equipment/transport
 £1,505 - DSSN Membership

Equipment spend includes:

- Updated lunchtime play equipment
- Replacing consumable sports equipment (lost, damaged, old)
- Increased number of bikes for year 1 bikeability
- Fine/gross motor skill equipment for EYFS

Pupil Premium

The PPG budget for 2025-2026 is budgeted as £34,030. This money will continue to provide interventions and support as identified by the EEF. Our main challenge is that many children who are eligible for PPG funding also have SEND needs, particularly in the areas of social, emotional and mental health, or communication and language.

9. Questions circulated in advance included:
10. *Please could you add a word of explanation about the St Mary's Smoult Fund?*
11. The Dr Smoult Fund is a charitable organisation overseen by a committee that includes members of the church. They provide financial support to those in need in Northchurch. They usually provide support towards the cost of residential trips for some of our families. They have also been generous enough to provide additional support to help children access emotional support.
12. *It is pleasing to see that the current Year 4's Spring attendance has improved over the years. However, persistent absentee numbers have risen to 26. What is the profile of these pupils (SEND/PP/vulnerable), and what targeted action is in*

- place? Error - I forgot to take out the non-statutory aged children. It's 21 (report amended.). 3 children (2 were late to return to school after summer as they were homeless). 1 child has special permission this year as her father is doing the clipper world race. 5 Children SEND (1 reduced timetable) 24% 5 Children EAL 24% 4 children PPG 19% 3 children SEND & PPG 14 % 2 children EBSNA (both have history of medical trauma) Most due to illness/medical needs*
13. *Year 4 multiplication is predicted at 63%. Could you share a little more context around this and the actions planned to support pupils ahead of the check?*
 14. Very clear expectation that there needs to be significant improvement. Children have been taught explicitly. Regular low stakes testing (blast off). SumDog used to assess knowledge and fluency. Parents given information about attainment. Written to parents to ask for support in regular practice (with clear rationale for the importance). LT liaising with other Maths leads to find out what is working well for them. Maths advisor CPD for staff: strengthen learning in lower years for long term improvement
 15. *I would be very interested to hear the outcomes of the parent questionnaire but I appreciate this probably will not be in time for our FGB this time round.*
 16. We have had 3 responses so far and $\frac{1}{3}$ of them is from JH. $\frac{2}{3}$ value Collective Worship. Most valued aspects are gathering, values and recognising similarities and differences in Christianity and other religions around the world.
 17. *Could more response be forthcoming if it is anonymous?*
 18. Yes, possibly however this questionnaire was for monitoring
 19. *What was the percentage return?*
 20. 3 people and a follow up is underway
 21. *If Ofsted arrived tomorrow, which areas would you feel strongest about — and which would you want more time on?*
 22. E is going to work on SEF and IDSR with me next week. Strengths: Safeguarding, attendance and behaviour, personal development and wellbeing, early years, many aspects of inclusion, many aspects of teaching and learning. More time on: Achievement, some aspects of inclusion and teaching and learning
 23. *What support do you most need from Governors this term (beyond SATs invigilation)?*
 24. SEA visit next week - Governor for am Maths session and pm SEF/IDSR session. Community Garden - potential push back on and claim playground for use.
 25. *Based on the predictions for the upcoming tests, specifically for KS2 writing (60% on track or above), do you feel the English scheme put in place last academic year, that focused on writing, has had a positive impact?*
 26. Year 5 was a turbulent year for this cohort - staff illness. We recognise the excellent work and high expectations set by P! 40% of the year 6 cohort on the SEN register – 12 pupils. 89% of the children not on SEND register on track for

EXP or GDS (11% GDS) 94% of the children non-SEND/Non EAL on track for EXP or GDS 25% of children on the SEND register on track for EXP or GDS. I taught this class in years 2 & 3, and I am blown away the progress many of the children on the SEND register have made. However, they are still work below the expected standard and this again, highlights the importance of our small steps tracking - because for some children, amount of intervention that has gone into that progress is enormous! The scheme AND the approach of more targeted support (not just for children with SEND, for ALL children) will take time to fully impact outcomes. The scheme has had an impact on engagement and motivation.

27. *Given the number of SEN children across the school, do the teachers have a strong understanding of the different types of SEN and what professional development is in place to strengthen this where needed to help support them in the classroom?*
28. We have an ongoing programme of CPD that involves supporting children with SEND. We have ADHD twilights books for 17th and 24th. We have accessed the universal plus resources with teaching strategies to work with children with specific needs. We work with specialist teachers to support us with children with more complex needs. Part of the bigger picture, that we need a greater focus on attainment and having a greater culture of attainment for all.
29. *Is the complaint anything that we should be aware of as a GB?*
30. The complaint was about me, so Julia and David have dealt with it. We should not say too much unless it progresses further and you are needed to be part of a panel. It has been managed effectively and sensitively and I am grateful for the consideration taken over my wellbeing and following policy and procedure.

The Board noted the update

12 To receive Committee and Link visit reports:

1. The following link visit reports were noted

Collective Worship Evaluation	28 Jan 2026	 Elizabeth O'Hare
Collective Worship Visit 16th Jan 2026	16 Jan 2026	 Sarah Morris
Collective Worship Visit 13th Jan 2026	13 Jan 2026	 Julia Hughes
Collective Worship Visit 12th Jan 2026	12 Jan 2026	 Sarah Morris

2. Colleagues were encouraged to visit the school during the school day and add a link visit report on GHUB

3. Academic Standards and Ethos Committee – Draft minutes circulated. A whole school data focus has been welcomed. Attendance and behaviour continue to be a focus and governors acknowledged the rising level of needs and associated adaptations to support children. External professionals are proactively sourced to support SEN and complex profiles. PPG continues to be well supported and Sports Premium continues to support longevity
4. Admissions Committee – 2027/8 policy recommended. Allocations have been undertaken and the school is oversubscribed for September reception intake (first choice). Nursery allocations will be undertaken after Easter
5. Resources and Premises – refer to draft minutes
6. Finance and Budget Update and Monitoring has been undertaken and governors noted the financial position of the school
7. **The Board reviewed and agreed the SFVS to be submitted to HCC**
8. An asset register will be drafted in line with good practice
9. Governor Development – colleagues encouraged to attend appropriate training according to their interests and responsibilities
10. Website – this has been audited and an action plan in place
11. Link Governor Visit reports were reviewed

Collective Worship Evaluation	28 Jan 2026	 Elizabeth O'Hare
Collective Worship Visit 16th Jan 2026	16 Jan 2026	 Sarah Morris
Collective Worship Visit 13th Jan 2026	13 Jan 2026	 Julia Hughes
Collective Worship Visit 12th Jan 2026	12 Jan 2026	 Sarah Morris

The Board noted the update

13 Safeguarding, Risk Assessment and GDPR Compliance Safeguarding:

1. Safeguarding – termly safeguarding report
2. GDPR Update on GDPR compliance – there are no GDPR breaches to report, 0 SAR to report and 0 FOIs to report
3. The Safeguarding reports are available on GHUB. Governors were assured that there continues to be a proactive culture of safeguarding across the school
4. The DPO has visited the school and the archiving of CPOMs records is being undertaken. Email retention is being reviewed. The AI Policy is in draft. Assurance was given that GDPR training has been booked for next academic year

The Board noted the update

14 Chair's Business:

1. The Academisation agenda was reflected on and no further requirements at this stage
2. The Chair confirmed that there are no notifications and correspondence received to share
3. The Chair confirmed that there have been no audits, reviews, inspections since the last meeting to note which have not been referred to
4. Confirmation was given that no action has been taken by the chair on behalf of the board since the last meeting
5. It was agreed that there are no items to be added to the risk register from this meeting
6. Colleagues confirmed that the meeting has been conducted in an open manner, and, that all governors have been able to participate and contribute to discussions. The Board has monitored its statutory requirements with regards to annual business
7. Succession Planning – The Board appointed the following Associate Members - Tristian Gielen from 24.02.26. He will be linked to the Resources committee and his skills and experience are welcomed. Kathy Jenkins 24.02.26 to Resources committee and her skills and experience are welcomed
8. **ACTION: Databases and websites, onboarding, and induction to be commenced.** JH
Clerk to be advised of email to add to GHUB
9. David White's term of office ends on 05.03.26 **ACTION: Reappointment to be followed up with the Diocese so that process is concluded in time and appropriate reappointment processes.** JH
10. **Reminder to complete the Cyber Security training** - for the school insurance and confirm with the Chair
11. **Handover of Resources Committee Chair and account signatories for the governor account has been completed to S Walberg** ALL

15 Any Other Business:

1. None

16 To agree Date of next meeting:

1. Colleagues were thanked for their contribution to the meeting
2. The next meeting will be held **Friday 5th June 2026 GB at 10.00**; Monday 21st September 2026 19.00 **In person**; Monday 30th November 2026 (This could be a policies review meeting **online**) and Monday 22nd Feb 2027 19.00 **Online and** Friday 11th June 2027 at 10.00 – **In person**

The meeting closed at 21.06