



Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting
held on Monday 15th December 2025 at the school

Present:

Parent Governor (2): Kirsty Largent

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

Foundation Governors (8): Phil Anderson, Linda Slim

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

PCC Appointed (5): David White

Co-Opted Governor (1): Sarah Morris

Associate Governors: Larry Eaton, Lu Farr-Smith, Scott Wallberg, Elizabeth O'Hare

In attendance: Tracey Middleton, Clerk to Governors, Laura Zimet, Deputy Headteacher

Absent:

LA Governor (1): Leena Clark (vice-chair 07.06.2025)

Ex Officio (1): Revd Jonathan Gordon

Documentation circulated in advance:

 1. Agenda fo 15th December FGB meeting 2025	
 2. Circulated Draft Minutes 29.09.2025 St Marys School	
 3. Confirmations-Summary-St Mary's CofE Primary School, Northchurch	 9. Nursery Admissions Policy and Application Procedure 2026-2027
 3. Register-of-interests-St Mary's CofE Primary School, Northchurch	 9. Nursery Supplementary Information Form 2026-27 - Church place applications
 3. School Improvement -SEF 2025 - 2026.docx	 9. PC003c_Reducing the Need for Restrictive Interventions in Schools Policy (November 2025)
 4. Summary School Improvement Plan 2025 - 2026	 9. PR001 Health and Safety Policy (July 2025) v1
 5. 251106-EA-916-SEA autumn visit report	 9 CM033 Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy (Nov 2025)
 6. Data Summary 2024_2025 (1)	
 6. Training-StMarysPrimarySchool	 13. Headteacher's report to the Governing Body December 2025.docx (1)

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 especially the new governors attending the meeting in person
2. The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting
3. The Chair noted that the meeting is quorate
4. The following vacancies and expiring of terms of office were noted and succession planning considered: L Slim 19.12.25

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: Leena Clarke and Jonathan Gordon

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

1. The minutes of the meeting dated 29.09.2025 which were circulated in advance of the meeting were agreed as an accurate record; signed and dated by the Chair
2. **ACTION: Signed minutes to be added to the school files as soon as possible** Chair
3. 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

5 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

5.1 Committee Reports Since September:

1. The Academic Standards and Ethos Committee met and minutes circulated - highlights include: literacy continues to be strength; maths is focus; SEA feedback, professional conversation and challenge is welcomed and supports; governor triangulation and provides value for money; SEN is a focus; Consistency continues to be monitored
2. The Admissions Committee met and minutes circulated – Admissions Policy recommended for ratification
3. The Resources and Premises met and minutes circulated – highlights include: a review of school security to be undertaken when clarified. 1 New Rd has required funding from the Governor Account, a quinquennial report is required by the Diocese and Synergie has been approached; the boiler impact has impacted on finances; account signatories require attention; premises inspections have been undertaken; the PoW is being delegated amongst the members
4. The Finance and Budget Monitoring has been undertaken
5. The Website has been audited and identified residual links to be removed. The policy updates are in hand
6. HT – Performance management cycle has been undertaken
7. The Ethos Committee met and minutes circulated - highlights include: an environmental walk has been undertaken to view the Christian ethos of the day which will be included in the Strategy Day in the future. A collective worship week has been identified and governors are invited to

attend the activities and a diary will be circulated. The link visit for collective worship should be completed

8. The Governor Development Coordinator update was noted
9. The Board agreed the pay recommendations and salary uplifts which were scrutinised by the Pay Committee

The Board noted the update

10 Equality and Diversity

1. Update Equality & Diversity Report and Action Plan to be updated every 4 years (last completed October 2021)
2. GB003 Equality and Diversity Scheme and Annual Progress Report on Action Plan
3. Governors debated stakeholder consultation on the policy and will include it in a future survey
4. **ACTION: The objectives in 4 key areas were reviewed and will be agreed at an Emergency Board Meeting in January**

JH

The Board noted the update

6 Governor link visits:

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

The following visits were noted:

2. School Priority 1: Writing David Laird Laura Zimet
3. School Priority 2: Phonics TBC Lauren Bishop
4. School Priority 3: Maths David Laird Lynne Tavender
5. School Priority 4: SEND Julia Hughes/Lucinda Farr
6. School Priority 5: Christian Distinctiveness David White/Jonathan Gordon Sarah Gray

SEND	23 Oct 2025	 Julia Hughes
English Link Visit	23 Oct 2025	 David Laird
Maths Link Visit (Fluency) inc. Safeguarding Questions	23 Oct 2025	 David Laird
PP Link Visit	23 Oct 2025	 Julia Hughes
Collective Worship Visit 20th October. 2025	20 Oct 2025	 Julia Hughes
Collective Worship Monitoring Harvest Festival	6 Oct 2025	 Leena Clark  Kirsty Largent  Linda Slim
Autumn Term Safeguarding Visit	19 Sep 2025	 Leena Clark

7. The PP and SEND visits were noted and an overview provided. Governors noted the data and agreed that our vulnerable groups are well catered for. The skills set across the adults in the classroom was acknowledged and quality first teaching is in place and good practice shared. Inclusion is highly promoted to ensure cultural capital opportunities are maximised for this group
8. Governors agreed that the pupil voice elicited during link visits is positive
9. Governors debated the impact of statistics to drive questioning and using it effectively to set the context of the school
10. Feedback on the SEA and Advisor meetings was given noting that governors were in attendance and governors agreed that the staff know the families well and there are case studies available to support the wider story. School leaders welcome the professional conversation and triangulation of the monitoring with the SEA and Advisors and acknowledged it is good value for money
11. The Ofsted framework was noted
12. **ACTION: It was agreed that the Resources review the SoD to address the expenditure of the Headteacher to £5k**

SG

KL left the meeting at 16.53

The Board noted the update

7 Safeguarding, Risk Assessment and GDPR Compliance Safeguarding:

1. Safeguarding · Annual Audit/Checklist to Governing Board is monitored by the link governor
2. The SCR Audit was undertaken in June and the recommendations have been followed up. All new starters have been added accordingly
3. Annual CLA SEF 2023-24 – there are no CLA children in school
4. Governor Safeguarding and Prevent Training – all governors have updated their training record to reflect training
5. The school's Risk Assessment noting that Evolve is used for trips
6. GDPR Update on GDPR compliance – there are no GDPR breaches, 1 SAR and 0 FOIs to report
7. **ACTION: The school will review RPA requirements for cyber security training for all staff and governors – frequency and provider**

JH

The Board noted the update

8 Monitoring of Premiums:

1. The Pupil Premium Strategy Statement (must be published by 31 December 2025) was approved by the Board
2. PE & Sport Premium impact review for autumn term was undertaken and governors welcomed the CPD being undertaken. Governors were assured that funding is being appropriately spent

The Board noted the update

9 Policies:

1. The Board ratified the policies from Admissions: PC001a Admissions; Reception PC001b Admissions Nursery; Supplementary Information Nursery
2. The Board ratified the policies from Standards: CM033 Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy; PC003c Reducing the Need for Restrictive Interventions in Schools Policy
3. **ACTION: The Board noted the policies from Resources: GB003 Equality and Diversity Scheme & Annual Progress Report on Action Plan; PC018 Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions; PM001 Pay; PM012 Disciplinary PR001; Health and Safety PM029; Early Career Teacher Induction will be ratified at the January meeting**
4. Assurance was given that the policies are model policies

JH

The Board noted the update

11 Governor Development and Training

1. 29th Jan 2026: 7pm Board Training Booked: Knowing your School and Ofsted

12 Chair's Business:

1. Confirmation was given that Get Information About Schools (GIAS) and the school website have been updated with governing board membership
2. The board noted the DfE recommendations for external reviews of governance to be undertaken at least every 3 years

3. The Academisation agenda was reflected on and no further requirements at this stage
4. The Chair confirmed that there are no notifications and correspondence received to share
5. The Chair confirmed that there have been no audits, reviews, inspections since the last meeting to note which have not been referred to
6. Confirmation was given that no action has been taken by the chair on behalf of the board since the last meeting
7. It was agreed that there are no items to be added to the risk register from this meeting
8. 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
9. Thanks were extended to the team for their support during this tenure as Chair
10. Priorities for the next agenda are considered in the PoW

13 Headteacher's Written Report — Autumn Term Update:

1. The board noted the school context

Year Group numbers

	Nursery	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2023	23	29	27	26	27	30	30	23
2024	18	29	30	27	29	30	30	30
2025	23	26	30	30	27	30	29	30

SEN numbers

	Nursery	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
2023	1	3	2	4	5	8	4	3
2024	1	1	3	3	11	6	9	5
2025	1	2	5	4	6	10	6	12

We currently have 3 children with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) and 1 more agreed and currently in draft. We have also secured Local High Needs Funding (LHNF) for 1 child.

2. The board noted the attendance data

Attendance Data YTD

	2025	2024	2023
Whole School Attendance	95.6%	95.8%	95.8%
Authorised Absence	3.9%	3.7%	3.5%
Unauthorised	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%
Persistent Absentees <90%	19	21	19
Severely Absent	1	2	
Reduced Timetables	1	3	

Attendance figures YTD

	Autumn 2025	Autumn 2024	Autumn 2023
Nursery (non-statutory)	94%	91.9%	96.03%
Reception	96.9%	96.4	97.2%
Year 1	97.2%	97.6%	95.9%
Year 2	95.5%	95.8%	95.3%
Year 3	96.8%	92.5%	94.1%
Year 4	92.6%	96.4%	95.5%
Year 5	95.1%	96.1%	95.5%
Year 6	95.9	96.9%	97.2%

Most authorised attendance is due to illness. There has been a particularly infectious sickness bug and cough circulating this yer.

3. Safeguarding remains our top priority, and we continue refining our systems and practices. Safeguarding questions and updates are a standing agenda item at all meetings. All staff members are Level 1 safeguarding trained. We have had 2 incidents of absconding. We have an absconding procedure in place and have reviewed and improved security around the gates and front door
4. Vulnerable “Valuable” pupils - We deem 7 families vulnerable. We continue to monitor and support them.
5. Single Central Record - actions raised after the summer audit have been completed. The SCR 100% compliant
6. Child Protection - There are 3 families previously known to a social worker. There is 1 live Child in Need case. There is 1 pending Families First Assessment. There is 1 recently closed Families First case.
7. There have been no notifiable GDPR breaches since my last report. We have had 1 Subject Access Requests (SAR) this term.
8. Behaviour - There have been 3 suspensions this term (2 children). There have been no racist incidents reported. There have been no sexist incidents reported. 1 homophobic incident was reported.
9. Allergy Incidents - There have been 2 allergy incidents. These are the first 2 incidents of this nature. SG has liaised with parents to develop a strategy to further develop inclusive culture around allergies.
10. Each subject leader has received at least one afternoon to dedicate to subject leadership. This term, subject leaders have focused on creating subject action plans, carrying out pupil voice and book looks. Findings are collated and will be fed back to staff early in the spring term to clarify

expectations, address
misconceptions/issues and share best practice

11. Pupil progress and attainment Assessment week is scheduled for the end of term and data will be submitted by 15th December. Pupil Progress Meetings will take place in Spring and will focus on attainment of specific groups – including SEND, EAL, PPG, gender and non-SEND/EAL/PPG. Teachers will be supported to use data more effectively to target support more effectively.
12. The school will receive the Sports Premium of £17,620 in the academic year 2025-2026. It has been allocated as follows: ● Targeted support to increase inclusion with Watford Community Sports and Sports Fever ● Developing fine and gross motor skills in EYFS - Supporting continuous provision ● Equipment/Transport ● DSSN Membership
13. The SEA visit focused on writing across the school. Leaders have made good progress on actions from previous visits, and improvements are visible in lessons and pupils' books. However, writing outcomes have declined gradually since 2023, and further work is required to ensure consistently strong practice across all classes. Governors noted that the visit was positive
14. Governors were assured that the suspension and exclusion process is well documented and trends are considered by school leaders - Governors noted the requirement in Paragraph 53 of the exclusion guidance and noted that the school monitors these to ensure that it does not have a disproportionately adverse impact on certain groups of pupils that may be considered vulnerable and that the school has complied with all equalities legislation in relation to this exclusion? – “There are longstanding national trends which show that particular groups of children are more likely to be excluded from school, both for a suspension or permanent exclusion. All of these factors will differ for each child, and the influence of out-of-school factors will vary according to local context, so it is important that schools, local authorities and local partners work together to understand what lies behind local trends”
15. Enhancing the role of student voice was discussed and it was agreed that student council or student leaders could be invited the Board and governors are welcome to attend the student council meetings
16. Further discussion and questions elicited that:
17. **Question – Is the type of SEN identified by year 3 specific? There is no determined trend however SEMH needs have increased and immaturity is also considered**
18. **Question – With the increasing trend in SEND, is this likely to continue to be an upward trend? The current Y1 and Y2 are covid born babies and support is required to prepare them for secondary school however it is a wider picture. Funding, the physical environment and training are**

challenges and the national picture reflects this. The White SEND paper is due to be published in the new year

It sounds like there has been some challenging behaviour this term, which must be disruptive for the classes (teachers, support staff and other pupils) affected, as well as for the SLT and admin staff. Are you happy that these staff are getting the support they need to deal with these behaviour incidents, and the aftermath?

Acknowledgement of challenge

- There has been some difficult and, at times, detrimental behaviour this term, which has been disruptive for pupils, teachers, support staff, SLT and admin teams.
- We recognise that working in these conditions is challenging and can be emotionally demanding for staff.

Nature of the behaviour

- Higher-level detrimental behaviour has been exclusively linked to pupils with SEND, reflecting the complexity of need rather than a whole-school culture issue.
- One pupil's behaviour has escalated significantly this year, largely due to a change in setting.

Support and intervention

- We are working closely with families and external agencies to adapt provision and ensure appropriate support for pupils with complex needs.
- Staffing levels are being increased, which will provide additional capacity and reduce pressure on existing staff.
- Targeted training is being strengthened, including:
 - ADHD training scheduled for the spring term.
 - General TA training available to support staff who wish to develop further skills.

Staff wellbeing and confidence

- Staff have reported that they feel supported, particularly as they can see that behaviour concerns are being taken seriously and that consequences are being appropriately escalated, including suspensions where necessary.
- Following incidents, I personally follow up with staff, checking on them both physically and emotionally.
- A termly TA forum provides a structured opportunity for support staff to voice concerns and request specific support.

Leadership response

- SLT remains highly involved in managing behaviour incidents and their aftermath, ensuring consistency, follow-through and staff reassurance.
- Recruitment of additional staff is ongoing and will further strengthen our response.

Recognition of staff efforts

- We are mindful of the need to recognise and value the efforts of all staff, particularly support staff, who are often managing the most challenging situations.
- This recognition is essential for morale, retention and wellbeing.

Impact and successes

- Despite the challenges, there have been notable successes.
- Several pupils who previously struggled significantly with behaviour are now managing more effectively and using strategies successfully, demonstrating the positive impact of sustained support and intervention.

What measures have been put in place to reduce the risk of absconding? Are there any high-risk areas on site that need checking, and would you like any governor support with this?

Clear procedures and response

- A clear, well-understood procedure is in place to respond immediately to any absconding incidents.
- Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities, ensuring a swift, coordinated response.

Site security measures

- Door and gate security has been increased, reducing opportunities for unauthorised exit.
- Ongoing work is taking place to ensure families and visitors are aware of security expectations and procedures.

Risk assessing the site

- The school perimeter has been walked and reviewed to identify potential high-risk areas.
- Identified risks have been addressed through practical adaptations, including:
 - Use of anti-climb paint
 - Relocation of climbing supports away from fences
 - Fences being built up or reinforced where needed

Staff communication and response

- Additional radios have been introduced, improving communication and enabling faster responses during incidents.

Operational adjustments

- Adapted arrival times have been implemented for specific pupils to reduce congestion and risk at key transition points.

Governor involvement

- At present, risks are being actively monitored and mitigated.
- Governor support would be welcome in:
 - Reviewing site safety and perimeter checks
 - Supporting or endorsing further security enhancements if required
 - Providing external challenge and reassurance that appropriate measures are in place

What improvements have been made to prevent allergy-related incidents? I noticed all teaching staff have done the Allergy Awareness CPD — will support staff be offered it too?

- **Training and staff awareness**
 - All staff, including teaching and support staff, have completed Allergy Awareness CPD, ensuring a consistent level of understanding and response across the school.
 - Annual refreshers happen as part of wider safeguarding and health training.
- **Parental engagement and oversight**
 - I met directly with the parents of the child involved in the incident to review the circumstances and level of risk.
 - As a joint decision, any future incidents will be reported to governors as an additional layer of monitoring and accountability.

- **Adaptations for individual pupils**
 - Adaptations for the child have been reviewed and adjusted.
 - Previously, measures were heavily focused on physical safety; these now place **greater emphasis on the child's wellbeing**, recognising that needs evolve as the child gets older.
- **Whole-school awareness**
 - We are increasing allergy awareness across the school community, including:
 - Assemblies (planned with and agreed by the family)
 - Awareness days organised by the **School Council**
 - This supports understanding, empathy and shared responsibility among pupils.
- **Policy and strategic planning**
 - I propose that “allergies” are explicitly named within the EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) plan, ensuring they are formally recognised and considered in future planning and decision-making.

What is the school council currently working on? Could a governor attend a meeting to hear their pupil voice?

- **Current focus of the School Council**
 - The School Council follows an annual programme of charity and awareness events, including:
 - Remembrance
 - Be Safe, Be Seen
 - Christmas Jumper Day
 - These activities help pupils develop a sense of responsibility, empathy and community involvement.
- **Developing pupil voice**
 - We would **strongly welcome increased pupil voice** through the School Council.
 - There is a clear intention for the School Council to play a more active role in:
 - Gathering pupil views from across the school
 - Representing wider pupil perspectives, not just council members
- **Leadership and next steps**
 - The School Council is led by **Mr Worth**, who is keen to further **develop and extend their role**.
 - Planned developments include:
 - Raising the profile of the School Council within school
 - Pupils speaking in **Collective Worship** about upcoming events and initiatives
- **Governor involvement**
 - A governor would be **very welcome to attend a School Council meeting**.
 - This would provide a valuable opportunity to:
 - Hear pupil voice directly
 - Strengthen links between pupils and governors
 - Support the continued development of the School Council's role and impact

SEN numbers have risen in Year 6 — how is this impacting provision and staff workload?

Context and staffing

- SEN numbers have risen in Year 6, increasing the level of need within the cohort.
- The new Year 6 class teacher is highly experienced in working with pupils with SEND, which has supported a strong start to the year.

Impact on provision

- Targeted interventions are already in place to address identified needs.
- An additional adult is deployed in the classroom to support pupils with EHCPs, ensuring access to learning and appropriate support.
- Provision is being adapted responsively based on ongoing assessment.

Assessment and progress tracking

- Regular assessments are taking place to monitor progress and identify gaps.
- Assessment information shows rapid progress, particularly in mathematics, which is a key focus area.
- Results and targets are shared with families to encourage engagement, reinforcement and support at home.

Impact on staff workload and wellbeing

- I have regular check-ins with the class teacher to monitor workload and wellbeing.
- The teacher has been explicitly encouraged to request additional PPA time if required, ensuring that increased need does not lead to unsustainable workload.

Ongoing monitoring

- The situation is being closely reviewed, with adjustments to staffing, provision or timetable made as needed to maintain both pupil progress and staff wellbeing.

Writing outcomes have declined since 2023. What specific actions are planned to reverse this trend, and how can governors monitor progress?

- **Context and current position**
 - Writing has been a key priority on the School Improvement Plan (SIP) for the past two years, reflecting sustained focus rather than inaction.
 - The decline in outcomes since 2023 is recognised and understood.
 - A change in staffing in UKS2 is likely to have contributed to some short-term impact on consistency and outcomes.
- **Actions already in place**
 - Clear, specific actions to improve writing are set out on the SIP, including:
 - Strengthening consistency of teaching approaches
 - Improving assessment and feedback
 - Supporting staff through monitoring and professional dialogue
 - These actions are ongoing and embedded rather than newly introduced.
- **Early signs of impact**
 - The SEA has noted positive improvements in writing, suggesting that strategies are beginning to take effect.
 - Internal monitoring indicates improved engagement and developing consistency in practice.
- **Monitoring and accountability**
 - Progress against writing actions is regularly reviewed through the SIP cycle.

- An active link governor for English/writing is in place and will:
 - Meet regularly with leaders
 - Review data and work samples
 - Provide both support and challenge
- Governor oversight
 - Governors can monitor progress through:
 - Termly SIP updates focused on writing
 - Data reviews and moderation outcomes
 - Feedback from the link governor
 - This ensures that improvements in writing remain a clear, measurable and accountable priority.

Are there areas or aspects you would recommend focusing on for the second governor link visits that would add most value in spring / summer term?

Use of data

- Focus on how data is collected, analysed and interpreted, moving beyond raw outcomes.
- Explore the “so what?”: how data directly informs teaching, intervention and strategic decisions.

Pupil groups

- Examine data through the lens of key groups, for example:
 - Pupils with SEND
 - Disadvantaged pupils
 - Year groups or cohorts with identified trends
- Consider how effectively provision is being adapted to meet the needs of different groups.

Impact of actions

- Review the impact of actions already implemented through the SIP.
- Look for evidence that strategies are:
 - Improving outcomes
 - Closing gaps
 - Supporting staff workload and consistency

Quality assurance and follow-through

- Consider how monitoring feeds into refinement of practice, rather than simply recording compliance.
- Explore what has worked well, what has had limited impact, and what is being adjusted as a result.

Value of governor visits

- These areas will allow governors to add the most value by:
 - Providing informed challenge
 - Offering strategic support
 - Gaining a clear understanding of how leadership decisions translate into classroom impact

What are your top three priorities as HT looking forward to the Spring term?

- Assessing progress across the school
 - A key priority for the spring term is a robust review of progress data across all year groups.

- This will include a sharp focus on:
 - Attainment and progress trends
 - Identified groups, particularly **vulnerable pupils and those with SEND**
 - Using data to inform next steps and targeted support
- **Increasing classroom presence**
 - I am prioritising time in classrooms to gain a clear, first-hand understanding of:
 - The quality of teaching and learning
 - Pupil engagement and behaviour
 - How agreed strategies are being implemented in practice
 - This will strengthen professional dialogue and ensure leadership decisions are grounded in classroom reality.
- **Inspection readiness and self-evaluation**
 - Preparation for the new Ofsted Inspection Toolkit, including:
 - Reviewing and refining the **SEF**
 - Ensuring alignment between intent, implementation and impact
 - Alongside this, updating the **SIAMS SEF** to reflect current practice, strengths and areas for development
 - This work will support both continuous improvement and inspection readiness.

It was good to see the teaching strengths being recognised and linked to pupil outcomes and I was wondering how these 'best practices' were being shared and implemented across all classes?

Sharing feedback and strengths

- Feedback from monitoring visits is **shared with staff**, highlighting teaching strengths and explicitly linking these to positive pupil outcomes.
- Effective practice is identified clearly so it can be replicated more widely.

Structured collaboration

- **Increased phase meetings** provide regular opportunities to:
 - Share and review appraisal targets
 - Discuss progress and challenges collaboratively
 - Agree joint actions based on what is working well

Collaborative planning

- Phase meetings are also used for **collaborative planning**, including:
 - Joint lesson design
 - Creation of shared scaffolds and resources
- This ensures consistency while allowing teachers to build on proven approaches.

Peer observation

- Staff are given opportunities to **watch each other teach**, enabling:
 - Professional dialogue around effective strategies
 - Practical modelling of best practice
 - Increased confidence in implementing new approaches

Embedding best practice

- These approaches help ensure that strong practice is **not isolated to individual classrooms**, but is systematically shared and embedded across the school.

In what ways do you think the school has done particularly well at celebrating diversity and strengthening a culture of inclusivity?

Whole-school ethos

- Inclusivity is embedded within the school's **values, policies and daily practice**, ensuring that diversity is recognised as a strength rather than an add-on.
- Staff consistently promote respect, empathy and understanding across all aspects of school life.

Curriculum and learning

- The curriculum reflects a **diverse range of cultures, backgrounds and experiences**, helping pupils to see themselves represented and to learn about others.
- PSHE, RE and collective worship are used effectively to explore themes such as identity, belonging, fairness and respect.

Support for individual needs

- Strong, responsive provision for pupils with **SEND and additional needs** demonstrates a clear commitment to inclusion.
- Adaptations are made thoughtfully, balancing safety, access to learning and pupil wellbeing.

Pupil voice and leadership

- The School Council and other pupil leadership roles provide opportunities for children to **shape decisions, raise awareness and lead initiatives**.
- Pupils are encouraged to express their views and listen to those of others respectfully.

Celebrating difference

- Assemblies, awareness days and charity events actively **celebrate difference and promote understanding**, often linked to national or global themes.
- Where appropriate, these initiatives are developed in partnership with families to ensure sensitivity and authenticity.

Staff diversity and representation

- The school benefits from **increasing diversity within the staff team**, which provides pupils with a wider range of role models.
- Diverse staff experiences and perspectives strengthen inclusive practice, enrich professional dialogue and help pupils see diversity reflected in leadership and everyday school life.

Staff culture and training

- Ongoing staff training supports inclusive practice and reinforces high expectations for all pupils.
- There is a strong culture of reflection and learning among staff, ensuring inclusivity continues to evolve rather than remain static.

Impact on pupils

- Pupils demonstrate confidence in talking about difference, fairness and respect.
- Relationships across the school are positive, and pupils feel **safe, valued and included**, regardless of background or need.

The year by year SEN data shows that Y3 seems to see a significant rise in SEN number for each cohort passing through it, which might be attributed to it being more common for that

age group to start display signs. Do you think this is a pattern and do you think there are any actions that could be taken to help year 3 staff and pupils in general?

Recognition of the pattern

- Yes, this does appear to be a recurring pattern, with Year 3 often showing a noticeable increase in identified SEN.
- This aligns with national trends, as the transition into KS2 and increased curriculum demands can make underlying needs more apparent at this age.

Understanding the context

- In Year 3, expectations around independence, written output, sustained attention and self-regulation increase significantly.
- For some pupils, this is the point at which previous coping strategies are no longer sufficient, leading to clearer identification of need.

Current and potential actions

- Early and consistent screening and assessment early in Year 3 to identify emerging needs quickly.
- Strong liaison between Year 2 and Year 3 staff, ensuring information about pupils at risk of SEN is shared effectively before transition.
- Targeted interventions introduced early in the year rather than waiting for difficulties to escalate.
- Continued access to additional adult support where cohorts include a higher proportion of need.

Support for staff

- Additional training and guidance for Year 3 staff, particularly around identifying SEND, adaptive teaching and behaviour as communication.
- Opportunities for Year 3 teachers to work alongside SENCo and colleagues with strong SEND expertise.

Supporting pupils

- Increased focus on pastoral support and self-regulation strategies in Year 3.
- Clear routines, scaffolds and flexible approaches to help pupils manage the transition into KS2 expectations.

Next steps

- Monitor SEN identification trends over time to confirm whether this remains a consistent pattern.
- Use this information to plan proactive support for Year 3 cohorts, reducing pressure on both pupils and staff and improving outcomes earlier.

While not directly part of the report, I had a question about the KS2 data tables - it seems to show that girls have a significantly lower EXS/GDS attainment rate for maths (56.3%) than Dacorum (70.6%) and National results (73.3%) while boys achieved better. Do you know why this is and are there plans in place to address this?

- **Acknowledgement of the issue**
 - Yes, the KS2 data shows a **notable gender disparity in maths**, with girls' EXS/GDS attainment lower than Dacorum and national figures, while boys performed more strongly.
- **Understanding the context**
 - The cohort size means percentages can be **significantly affected by a small number of pupils**.
 - Within this cohort, a higher proportion of girls also had:

- Additional needs
- Lower starting points in maths
- Confidence and anxiety-related barriers, particularly around formal assessments

- **Possible contributing factors**
 - Confidence and self-efficacy in maths, particularly when faced with reasoning and problem-solving under timed conditions.
 - Perceptions around maths and risk-taking, with some girls being more cautious in their responses.
 - Disruption to learning (Covid) earlier years, which may have disproportionately affected some pupils.
- **Actions already in place**
 - **Maths is a whole-school priority**, with a strong focus on reasoning, talk and representation.
 - Regular assessment is being used to identify gaps early, not just in attainment but in **confidence and approach to maths**.
 - Teaching approaches increasingly emphasise:
 - Mathematical talk
 - Mistakes as learning
 - Multiple representations to deepen conceptual understanding
- **Planned actions to address the gap**
 - **Closer monitoring of maths outcomes by gender** alongside other groups.
 - Targeted support and intervention where patterns begin to emerge, rather than waiting until KS2 outcomes.
 - Continued professional development to support:
 - Adaptive teaching in maths
 - Strategies that build confidence and resilience, particularly for girls
 - Pupil voice work to better understand attitudes to maths and perceived barriers.

- **Governor oversight**
 - This will be monitored through:
 - Termly data reviews
 - Maths subject leader reports
 - Link governor discussions focusing on groups and impact
 - Governors will be able to see how identified actions translate into improved confidence, engagement and outcomes over time.

The Board noted the update

13.1 School Improvement Plan (SIP) & Self-Evaluation (SEF) — Autumn Review:

1. An overview of the priorities, monitoring and CPD was provided
2. Strengths in Teaching & Learning:
 - Effective modelling of the writing process seen in many classes, including clear use of phoneme frames, explicit reference to success criteria, and shared writing that demonstrates high expectations.
 - Scaffolding is generally strong, with sentence starters and other supports helping pupils compose independent writing.
 - Precise adult feedback is helping some pupils make accelerated progress.
 - Use of Chromebooks to support pupils' individual needs was appropriate and effective.
 - In classes where teaching is strongest, pupils showed positive learning behaviours, good listening, focused partner talk, and willingness to contribute ideas.
 - Teachers encouraged the use of ambitious and precise vocabulary, enriching pupils' writing.
 - Phonics teaching in Reception shows strong fidelity to the chosen programme, supporting early writing skills.
 - In Nursery, children were effectively supported with pencil grip and high-quality talk, strengthening foundational language skills.
3. Areas for Development
 - Unaddressed low-level disruption during whole-class teaching, where pupils disengaged and teachers continued over background noise.
 - Lost learning time when pupils wandered or became distracted while waiting for exercise books; simple routines such as distributing books in advance would reduce disruption.
 - Some scaffolds lacked precision, particularly for pupils working towards expected standards. They were sometimes too generic to meaningfully support next steps.
 - A need for smaller, more achievable targets for some pupils who require a longer-term trajectory to reach expected standards—potentially over 2–3 years rather than one

The Board noted the update

14 Stakeholder voice:

1. **ACTION:** The strategy day being on a school day is being discussed – dates to be circulated. It was agreed that GB meetings are reduced to 3 per year next year noting requirement for business meeting to allocate roles and committees JH
2. The newsletter will be used to provide the parent body with an update on governance across the school. Colleagues debated ways of promoting the profile of the governors across the parent body

The Board noted the update

15 Any Other Business:

1. None

16 To agree Date of next meeting:

1. 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 undertaken including DBS, databases, GIAS etc** JH
2. Colleagues were thanked for their contribution to the meeting
3. The next meeting will be held Monday 23 February 2026, 19:00–20:00 (virtual)

The meeting closed at 17.50