Ickleford Primary School
Shared Values · Shared Aspirations · Shared Achievements

MINUTES FROM FULL GOVERNING BOARD HELD ON 18th MAY 2026

PRESENT:
Dr Miles Maxwell (Chair)
Mrs Jessica Beesen-Smith
Mrs Liz Bundy
Mr David Bunker
Dr Maciej Hermanowicz
Ms Kim King
Mr James Mendis
Mr Richard Murrell
Ms Tobi Olujinmi
Mr Neil Osmond
Dr Elizabeth Skinner
Mrs Shirley Williams
Mrs Sarah Wright (Headteacher)
Mrs Chris Barker
Ms Gill Lawton
Mrs Katie Farrell

APOLOGIES:
Reverend Margaret Holford
Reverend Mary de Salis

1 Welcome and apologies

MM welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Apologies were received, and accepted, from Reverend Margaret Holford and Reverend Mary de Salis.

2 Conflict of interest and confidentiality

No conflicts of interest or confidentiality issues were declared.

3 Notification of Any Other Business

No additional items were raised.

4 Previous minutes from 2nd March 2026 and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

Matters Arising

The following matters arising from the previous meeting were discussed under relevant agenda items during the course of the meeting:

- Staff morale
- Prevent training
- Training log updates

5 Governing Board Membership

a. Appointment of LA Governor:

Dr Miles Maxwell was proposed for a further four-year term as LA Governor.

Proposed by Neil Osmond and seconded by Tobi Olujinmi.

Resolved: Appointment approved unanimously.

b. Clerk Appointment Update:

Governors received an update regarding recruitment for the Clerk role. Due to discrepancies in some of the candidate's identification documents it was decided, under Safer Recruitment processes, to withdraw the conditional offer. Neil Osmond reported that he was encouraging a former Operations Director and other contacts within the governor network to apply. The advert remains live on Teach in Herts.

6 Finance Committee and Budget Setting

KF provided an overview of how the proposed 2026–2027 budget had been formulated. The version presented for approval and ratification by the committee was Version 4.

KF explained that, following completion of Scenarios 1 and 2 and a subsequent combined scenario, the placement allocation for new starters in September 2026 had been released. During Reception transition discussions regarding levels of need, two children with EHCPs and high levels of additional need had already been identified. Taking this into account, alongside the wider level of special educational needs and mental health and wellbeing needs across the school, it was proposed that two new members of staff be recruited:

- 1.0 FTE Learning Support Assistant to support the new Reception cohort, and
- 0.6 FTE member of staff to lead pupil Mental Health & Wellbeing provision and targeted interventions.

KF advised that the proposed budget represented a deficit budget in Year 1 when considering income against expenditure. However, due to a healthy carry forward from 2025–2026, the budget remained balanced across the three-year period required by Hertfordshire County Council.

Questions Raised

Why is there such a high level of carry forward?
KF explained that, following the approved business case, it had always been the school's strategy to maintain an appropriate level of carry forward in order to protect the budget and mitigate financial risk in future years. Governors were assured that the carry forward had not impacted expenditure on key school priorities, with investment in resources and school redecoration continuing to remain a priority.

What is the current status of the Fund Account?
KF reported that the Fund Account balance remained healthy. Although projects were planned which would require use of the fund account, the balance would continue to maintain an appropriate level to safeguard the school's future financial position.

What would happen to the proposed staffing roles if the children with EHCPs moved to another school?
KF confirmed that the proposed posts would be offered on fixed-term contracts linked to the EHCP funding arrangements.

We currently have only 26 confirmed pupils in the 2026/ 27 Reception cohort. Are the spare places likely to be filled? Is this a trend we might expect to continue? And if so, what will the financial implications be?
KF and SWr noted that there is continued interest in the available Reception spaces, and we will likely reach/ come close to our PAN. Falling birth rates is a national/ county-wide issue, and HCC have indicated that they are working on strategies to address the consequences on school numbers. This, and the large number of additional housing developments in Ickleford, should limit the impact on the school.

The Full Governing Board approved the 2026–2027 budget.

Building an inclusive community; Developing resilient pupils

7 Updates from Other Committees

a. ES&B Committee – 17 April 2026

Governors discussed:
Adding timescales for key projects to the minutes.
The ongoing cloud project which is due to commence in July.
The library project will continue despite budget pressures as it will be paid for from the Fund account.
The board received clarification regarding CPOMS as the school's safeguarding and child protection recording system, its role in recording safeguarding, behaviour and mental health and the relevant restrictions and access controls it possesses.

b. Personnel Committee – 15 April 2026

Governors discussed:
Current staff morale and workload pressures - Staffing pressures remain the primary concern, particularly around TA deployment and increasing curriculum demands. Governors noted that although workloads are high, staff continue to work collaboratively and celebrate pupil successes, particularly during SATs week.
MH added that, during a science link governor visit, he had spoken to staff who stated that being within the Ofsted window had also added to the pressure.
Open communication continued to be encouraged among staff and SLT although no significant issues were being raised with SLT.

Pastoral support from Rev. Mary continues with her visiting over lunch times. This has been well received by staff members.

Governors observed that morale appeared improved compared with previous visits, although Ofsted remained a significant source of pressure.

Action: Name of Clerk applicant to be removed from the Personnel committee minutes

Discussion also took place regarding staffing arrangements in the school office and on school trips, and ensuring effective deployment of senior staff time.

Action: MM to contact the staff member who previously raised concerns to review how their perception of staff morale.

c. Performance & Development Committee – 21 April 2026
No questions were raised.

Ensuring a happy teaching environment; Building an inclusive community

8. Headteacher's Report

Governors received the Spring Term Headteacher's Report.

SEND and Inclusion
The Headteacher explained that a small number of pupils had been removed from the SEND register where intervention levels no longer justified continued inclusion on the register as they were accessing the curriculum. Governors were assured that adaptive teaching strategies would continue for those pupils.

Governors discussed:
The increasing number of pupils on referral pathways, particularly within Years 4 and 5, and whether they might have been supported sooner.
The lengthy waiting times for assessments and diagnoses through Child Development Centres
The importance of ensuring that appropriate support is put in place by the school at an early stage, prior to any formal diagnosis. The Headteacher assured governors that early identification and support for pupils' needs is in place and remains a priority.

SIAMS Inspection
Governors welcomed the positive SIAMS inspection report, noting:
The RE curriculum was seen as a strength for the school.
Positive pupil voice
Recognition of the school's welcoming ethos

Governors discussed:
Governors noted that the SIAMS outcome may positively support future Ofsted inspections.

Questions raised

Staff were asked for an update on the areas for development noted in the SIAMS inspection. These priorities have been reviewed. Initial work to further integrate the RE curriculum is being planned by Laura Downie for September 2026, alongside actions relating to the other two identified areas for development.

Curriculum and Enrichment

Governors discussed:
Parent and community engagement opportunities such as 'Pop in and Read' are ongoing. MH suggested reintroducing opportunities to engage the community such as when he came in to Reception to speak about Polish traditions at Christmas.
Suspension of the PSQM award due to capacity pressures. Kim King has continued to attend training which will result in a certificate of participation.
Ongoing CPD provision and ensuring value for money through staff passing knowledge on to their colleagues.
Therapeutic Thinking behaviour training completed by JBS and SWr. This was a train the trainer course and JBS and SWr can therefore train other staff members.
EBSA (Emotional Based School Avoidance) now referred to as EBSNA (Emotional Based School Non Attendance). A discussion was had as to whether the school had any pupils that required a member of staff to greet them in the morning. SWr confirmed that this would not be appropriate for the specific children who currently have EBSNA action plans.
Positive parent feedback regarding SATs arrangements was given by RM.
Governors commended the extensive range of pupil support and enrichment opportunities available.

The board also recognised the excellent work undertaken by Mrs Livingstone in covering the SENCO role.

Ensuring a happy teaching environment; Building an inclusive community; Instilling values; Developing resilient pupils; Nurturing potential

9. SDP Reviews and Link Governor Reports

Governors thanked colleagues for the high quality of SDP reviews and link governor reports submitted.

Discussion included:
Strong references to adaptive teaching across all reports.
Timelines for end-of-year reviews - Completion of reports by Governor Day on 8 July. Staff should therefore submit documentation for review by the end of June.
Governors noted that end-of-year reviews would be completed as a paper exercise without additional visits being required.

Nurturing potential

10. Logistics for July Governor Visit Day

Volunteers were requested for the Governor Meetings with Pupils. It was confirmed that:
ES, RM and NO would meet with School Council at 10.30
JM, MH and TO would meet with Year 6 pupils at 10:30
Governors discussed adopting a more informal approach to staff engagement during the visit day rather than a formal tea-and-biscuits session.
Governors were reminded to engage broadly with pupils over lunch time and not sit with their own children.

11. Safeguarding

No additional safeguarding updates were reported.

Thanks to SWr for producing the Annual Safeguarding Audit. This document covers everything required as supporting evidence for an Ofsted inspection.

Governors reviewed sections of the annual safeguarding audit in allocated groups.
Feedback included:

- The audit was comprehensive and clearly presented
- Leadership oversight was strong
- Policies and procedures were detailed and up to date

- Training records were appropriately maintained
- The document would provide strong evidence for Ofsted

Governors discussed:
Risk assessments for alternative provision providers, namely Riding for the Disabled.
DBS checks only require renewal following a break in service of more than one year or where concerns arise. The governing board are therefore compliant with regards to DBS.
Barred list checks are completed more regularly
Governors thanked the Headteacher for the significant work involved in preparing the safeguarding audit.

Ensuring a happy teaching environment

12. Training

Governors were reminded to ensure training records are fully updated for publication on the governance section of the website.
Recent Prevent training had been completed by:
Neil Osmond
David Bunker
Liz Skinner
Maciej Hermanowicz
Richard Murrell

Action: James Mendis to book governor induction training ASAP.

Education White Paper

Governors discussed the concept of "pupil belonging" and future expectations for schools to assess belonging indicators.

Action – JBS to research how to assess Pupil Belonging.

Complaints Toolkit

Governors discussed the increase in complaints nationally and the benefits of accessing the HFL Complaints Toolkit.
The following governors were allocated logins:
Sarah Wright
Tobi Olujinmi
Neil Osmond

Gill Lawton
Miles Maxwell
Governors reviewed the distinction between Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaint processes, with stage 1 being dealt with by one member of the Governing Board and Stage 2 requiring a panel.

13. GDPR
No GDPR updates were reported.

14. Policy Review

Complaints Policy
Governors reviewed amendments including a change to the vexatious complaints appendix as the original was not optimal for inclusion. NO has reworded the appendix whilst keeping various protections in place.

A complaints process flowchart has also been added at Appendix 4.

Governors approved the changes in eligibility for what triggers a Stage 2 complaint, and the exclusion of FGB decisions from this policy (per the model policies on which ours is based). However, the option of requesting a review of a FGB decision has been included in the revised Policy.

Discussion also clarified:
Complaints concerning staff follow separate HR or whistleblowing procedures however volunteers may use the complaints procedure

Resolved: Complaints Policy approved subject to final amendments.

Restrictive Interventions Policy
Governors noted that HFL's model policy is currently undergoing legal review. The school already has procedures and recording systems in place and will implement the final policy once available.

Safe Intimate Care Policy
Governors noted the policy and current arrangements for one pupil requiring intimate care support.

Draft RSHE and PSHE Policies

The start of the school's consultation period on the policy is imminent. JBS is delivering a presentation/ Q&A with parents via teams on Wednesday 20th May 2026 to share the draft policies and start two-week consultation period. The Teams meeting will not be recorded. However, the slide presentation will be shared after the meeting.

Ensuring a happy teaching environment; Building an inclusive community

15. Preparation for Ofsted

The governors were asked to consider whether there needed to be any additions to the schools strengths and areas for development matrix.

Governors agreed that "Cultural Capital" would be reframed as "extra-curricular clubs and opportunities."

A discussion took place on whether Oracy was now a strength. It was agreed to keep as an area of development but with the understanding that it is gaining momentum and will be moving towards being a strength.

Governors recognised that SEND provision is likely to form an important focus area within any future inspection, reflecting the growing complexity of pupils' needs nationally, and the increasing numbers of pupils needing support. Governors noted the extensive support and provision already in place within the school and acknowledged the staff's strong commitment to meeting pupils' needs effectively within the resources available.

The financial situation of the school and financial practices should be seen as a strength.

Governors discussed parental communication and acknowledged that parent surveys can provide a valuable opportunity for families, including those of pupils with SEND, to share their experiences and perspectives. Governors recognised the importance of continuing to maintain positive, open, and supportive communication with all families.

Maths boosters, extra classes and extra-curricular provision should all be seen as a strength of the school.

Leadership opportunities for pupils is a strength with a development opportunity for more inclusion and showing pupils as model citizens.

NO posed the question – What would be the best guess at the three things Ofsted would want to see improved?
SEND was discussed as a potential focus due to the national picture and its high focus throughout the toolkit. The school's SEND provision in the context of inspection readiness was considered and the significant strengths already in place were recognised.
It was noted that, based on the draft SEF, the school is meeting expected standards across all areas, with many aspects demonstrating strong practice. Governors and leaders agreed that ongoing development work is focused on further strengthening and embedding high-quality practice consistently across the school for all pupils with SEND.

Governors noted the importance of ensuring all link governors are fully prepared for inspection discussions and familiar with their documentation.

MM will direct any questions relating to individual subjects to the link governors. Each link Governor should be prepared with at least the last three SDP reviews, and the SDP plan for the next year (assuming an autumn 2026 inspection). All governors should also bring their most recent link governor visit report(s) to the meeting with the Inspector. Chairs and clerks to have copies of their own committee meeting minutes. Governors do not need a copy of centrally held documents.

The Board reflected positively on the value of previous inspection preparation activities.

16. Any Other Business
LB asked whether governors wished to receive holiday dates information. It was agreed that this is not necessary.

17. Date of Next Meeting
Wednesday 8 July 2026 at 1:15pm

ACTION SUMMARY

MINUTE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	DEADLINE
7b	Name removed from minutes of Clerk applicant	CB	May 2026
7b	MM to contact the staff member who previously raised concerns to review how they are currently feeling.	MM	May 2026
12	James Mendis to book governor induction training ASAP.	JM	ASAP
12	To research how to assess Pupil Belonging.	JBS	Next July 2026