

Minutes of the Meeting of Full Governing Board held at Inkpen Primary School

on Tuesday 20th January 2026

Present: Mrs S. Sim (SS) Chair
Mrs Judith Charles (JC)
Mr Martin Chester (MC)
Mr Tom Layton (TL)
Miss F Buck (FB) Headteacher
Mr S Higgins (SH) Teacher
Miss R Lambert (RL) Clerk

1. Apologies

Mr Mark Harrison (Accepted)

2. Declaration of business and personal interest

SS Inkspots Treasurer

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes approved.

Action: RL to upload to website

4. Matters Arising from last meeting

Complete

5. Review of SDP and SEF

Questions:

JC

Performance Reviews

- *When are they planned , are they documented ?*
- *Are there plans for all support staff to have one this calendar year and could they be delegated so Frances doesn't need to cover them all as this would be seen as good practice especially with the changes to come ; this came up as a common theme in my wellness chats and could help diffuse tension / concerns.*

Review of forthcoming SDP actions – April & and July

- *What is the strategy / planning to transfer some of this to the interim head etc?*
- *What needs carry over / completion from December to ensure consistency?*

SH

How are we assured that adaptive teaching is improving classroom practice rather than increasing reliance on additional adults?

Which aspects of school improvement are most vulnerable if staffing changes or capacity reduces?

How is the assessment data looking for our lowest 20 percent? If they are not making excellent progress against their starting points, why not?

SS

L2/L3 I note that staff performance reviews haven't yet been carried out, have they now been scheduled? Also, will these also include all support staff as well as teachers?

B3 Are you able to share the attendance figures with us - you report that they have improved since last year?

FB Thanked everyone for their questions. I would like to bring up the inset day at the end of last term where the teachers discussed the Ofsted Toolkit. One of the areas that came up was surrounding oracy. We identified different ways to promote oracy in the English Curriculum, and we felt that it was as refined as it needed to be. There are a lot of the ways to promote it, but it is an area that needs to be developed. For Governors, oracy can be evidenced through learning walks and direct conversations with pupils. In a science lesson, for example, this includes observing how talk is used to develop reasoning, explain processes, and support problem-solving. Establishing consistent, high-quality approaches to oracy across all subjects is a key priority, reflected in both the SEF and the SDP and aligned with whole-school development.

SH There is inclusion for those who find it difficult to communicate and has been added to our inclusion target. Our most vulnerable children will benefit from this.

SS How else do you have to promote oracy within the school?

SH We have weekly reading swaps, Poetry Day, Language Day, and our Pantomime and end of year plays.

FB Reading and flashbacks show what we do well and helps develop oracy. There is a lot of discussion with the children and methods such as choral and echo reading are used. We also encourage strong adult reading which helps.

SH We have a target where we need to develop a means of being precise and making sure oracy is delivered consistently across the whole school.

SS How do you record that?

SH We will need an oracy question for Governors Learning Walks so it can be seen in practice.

FB Thinking about the curriculum, Ofsted will want to know that it has been carefully planned, and oracy has been developed into the curriculum.

FB There were some questions surrounding performance reviews. Last term was very busy with SH on paternity leave and FB having pregnancy scans. Performance reviews will happen before Easter for both teachers and support staff. This has become increasingly important following the wellbeing discussions held by JC.

JC Could you delegate some of the reviews?

SS Can the Governors help?

FB The person who I would delegate it would be SH and that would be helpful, but on this occasion is something I would like to do and would ensure constancy.

SS I can help with cover if needed?

FB Thank you, I think it would be useful for you to help with cover while the reviews are taking place.

SS For the record in March I will be covering Inkspots on Monday and Thursday.

FB There was a question regarding viewing SDP in terms of April and July. We have an agenda item later where I would like to talk about maternity leave and cover. Now is the time we are thinking about what that will look like and the strategy transferring to an interim head. I will ensure everything is in place and nothing is outstanding. We are hoping we will recruit internally. That person will be familiar with the school, the SDP and what the school's priorities are. I have spoken to HR who have confirmed we can cover/recruit internally.

TL So you are going to look for a maternity cover?

FB We can talk about that later. Having spoken to SS and JC about my wellbeing, the plan is I will drop teaching time gradually so I can spend more time on areas such as the SDP, the curriculum and school development. An Internal candidate will have strong knowledge about each of these areas. My time will be planned carefully, and I will ensure time is given for those discussions.

Regarding the question about attendance, it has improved. The DofE have a great platform on producing attendance summaries, taking into account various platforms. In Autumn Term last year our attendance was sitting at 87.6%, a year later it was 92.4% and currently 93.2%. We do hold attendance meetings with parents, and letters are sent out for all children. I also have meetings with the WB Attendance Officer. There is a need to put attendance into context and consider children with reduced timetables, absentees due to illness and how we manage their return to school. This may be the child coming in for half a day, or the child goes home at lunchtime for some quiet time and returns ready for the afternoon.

SS Do you do carry out home visits?

FB For safeguarding purposes we do. Recently we went to see one child who has social and emotional difficulties.

SH We also have a long term absent child who attends class regularly via robot and regular home visits are made to him.

TL Is the size of the school considered?

FB The context of the school will be considered. Small schools are often more inclusive and attract more special needs children.

SH When you look the new Ofsted framework, attendance is bundled in with behaviour.

FB Looking at some recent inspection report cards, you will have to click through the report to get the full picture behind a school's attendance and behaviour.

FB With inclusion, adaptive teaching is becoming an increasing practice. Much of our inclusion practices are currently the child with an additional adult. There are also strategies we use in the classroom without additional of adults, for example some children stand, some have their own table, whatever they need for a successful lesson.

SH The problem with the over reliance of the one-to-one teaching is that it keeps them away from their peers. Withdrawing support from that safety blanket too quickly can cause anxiety and set that child up to fail. Adaptive teaching is making teaching available to all children. Teachers are the professionals and every child should have access to that. Good teaching can be created for all children provided it's done correctly and we would like to see all our learners in class. Several of our current children have significant support but they are very young.

FB It is worth pointing out that where we have made the decision to have a child outside of the classroom, it is after support from external agencies.

SS You are doing your best to educate children with significant special needs.

FB When looking at the reduction of capacity we need to recognise this is linked to inclusion. Currently we rely heavily on staffing and adult support, but any budget changes would lead to loss of staff, which would impact the children. We need to be more successful in our integration of our current children. In addition, with FB being away we would like to keep the school improvement structure secure. We have a strong teaching team who are receptive to change and highly skilled. The key question moving forward is how we reduce our reliance on adult support while sustaining high-quality provision for all pupils.

FB The assessment data for our lowest 20%, we don't have all the data from teachers. This will be shared next time in the HT Report. The children are closely assessed, monitored and there are progress meetings and gaps in their learning are worked on. These children are making progress. Pupil Progress meetings look at what additional resources can be put in place to help. One class has a high percentage of vulnerable and SEN children. The teacher has been looking at the classes' multiplication knowledge, looking at what else could be done? SENCO offered more strategies and gave immediate intervention and support.

SH Those children are forming the foundation of our pupil voice. We are now calling them the first 20% as they are the first people we think about.

FB Those are all the questions that I received. Are there any other questions?

6. Objectives for the Governing Board

SS We have updated the document.

FB explained the Ofsted framework in the last FGB and JC,SS and RL attended Governor Services Ofsted training online.

FB We may not get Ofsted until March as the dates are from report date. We were inspected in June our report wasn't published until September.

SS Most of the objectives were to be completed by the summer term and we are getting through them.

FB Objective 3 paves the way to ensure actions in the SDP are implemented.

Action: RL put key at the bottom of what each colour means.

Action: SS to update Objective 4.

SH There do need to be more specific targets.

Action: MH and SH to have SENCO meeting.

SS The Governors Development plan to be more detailed.

Action: SS to update.

7. Annual Support Statement

FB The Ex-Chair used to write a letter which was published on the website highlighting all the things the Governors had achieved during the year. Looking at guidance from LA they would like a report statement evidencing what the Governors have achieved over the last year to support the school.

Examples of these are learning walks, wellbeing support, pupil voice, PP meetings, SEND discussions

Action: SS/RL to look for a Governor report template.

It would be useful for the report to include what was the Governors impact on the school, what has changed and happened due to their actions. JC came into school to meet with the staff in the capacity of Wellbeing Governor, that needs to be documented. It would be a good exercise to go over the Ofsted Inspection Toolkit with regards to leadership and governance.

Action: RL/Hannah to see if a Gov Hub report is available.

8. Ofsted

FB shared a folder that she has collated in preparation for Ofsted. Ofsted will use the IDSR (Inspection Data Summary Report) as a starting point of inspection. That data is a snapshot of the school. They will want to know about the high percentage of EHCP's and the number of children on the SEND register. They will want to know the reason behind identifying these children early, and whether the SEND register has been audited. We have had a few new children joining us whose parents see how much we do for those with an EHCP.

SS I notice that parents like small schools for SEND children.

FB I've collated evidence of what we do regarding attendance and behaviour, the support meetings, the attendance letters. This year many parents questioned the attendance, so we printed off the child's attendance sheets, and added a traffic light system based on handout from authority and used wording supporting that. The data published is not in context, so I've looked at what data they haven't got so that it can be presented. It's basically filling in the gaps from the IDSR snapshot.

I've collated policies and tool kits to show what's been put in place. My class drop-ins are informal, I've looked at books, spoken to teachers and the children so I can tell Ofsted what classes will look like. The SEF and SDP are both working documents and are in line with everything we want to achieve.

SS So you are ready for Ofsted?

FB It feels like we are getting more ready every week, and we keep improving.

SH I spoke to a SENCO from a recently inspected school. Normally safeguarding is their number one item, but now it seems inclusion was the thread that ran through everything. They wanted teachers to identify first 20% SEND children, PPG children and what was being done to include these children. SLT and SENCO are inspected more than anyone else.

9. Staffing Structure

I believe that, in the best interests of the school, it would be wise to appoint an internal candidate as Interim Head. That person will already know the school well, is established in a leadership role, and who is already making a strong contribution. This would provide greater stability for pupils, parents, and staff rather than recruiting externally at this stage. HR were consulted and, in an email, they said in principle it is possible for a Governing Body to appoint an internal member of staff to act as headteacher on a temporary basis to cover a period of maternity leave, particularly in small schools where capacity is limited and continuity is a key consideration. The employment needs to be fair and should be advertised to all teaching staff. That will be done by emailing all teaching staff and putting a paper copy of the job description in the staffroom and make everyone aware it is there. The process needs to be clearly documented, and we need to agree that this will be in the best interest of the school. We need to formally approve the temporary position.

SS The financial side of this was discussed in our finance meeting.

TL What happens if in interview we don't think the internal candidate is suitable, then what do we do?

FB We would have to advertise externally.

TL I presume go through the whole interview process?

FB That is correct and it would be a long process.

JC What's the timing for that?

FB We would have to have an extra meeting for that.

JC If only one candidate applies, that wouldn't be seen to be good practice? Wouldn't you need a competitive situation?

FB We would need to make sure that everything is documented correctly and thoroughly. We need to document questions to ensure that this person is the correct person to take over. As a small school there is often only have one candidate for many of our jobs. We need to make sure the school is in the best possible hands. Recruitment generally is currently very challenging especially in a small school.

SS The SBM has run through the costs via the p9 breakdown document on Gov Hub, with the projected cost of maternity leave and cost of an interim teacher.

JC The impact this financial year is not significant, but it will be in the next financial year.

FB My maternity pay will be a lot less than my actual salary which will help the school financially.

The teaching commitments would need to be covered and that has been factored in.

JC/SS All those in favour of internal candidate. **Agreed by SS/JC/TL/MC.**

FB We need to ensure the individual meets the relevant professional requirements for the role.

TL What are the professional requirements?

FB A post graduate and a qualified teacher.

TL Don't they need senior leadership training?

FB It's not a requirement, other knowledge and experience will be more desirable for this role. Is this person going to be able to drive the school forward? Will they have enough authority and a good knowledge of the school? We need to agree the temporary pay arrangements in line with the school pay policy. This was discussed with KP and FB and would be within the pay scale of L6 – L12 but would be at L6.

There will be a need to record the rationale for the approach taken, including why an external appointment was not pursued. The interim headteacher will need to maintain the culture and the ethos of the school create continuity and ensure the school culture is maintained for the benefit of parents, pupils and staff.

The next step is to put out an advert out internally via email. The application form is standard. With the interview the Governors will need to have a discussion with KP to ensure that the correct questions are asked within the interview.

When that person is appointed, there will be a handover, but that person will have to work with KP for timetables, monitoring and support.

SS Are we looking at May half term for this?

FB My due date is the 7th June. I will probably take 9 months maternity leave, but I can change that with notice. I would like to have everything in place by Easter and then communicate this with parents.

SS You haven't mentioned about stepping back slightly up to that point as discussed in your review.

FB During my review we discussed how I move away from teaching to ensure everything in my Headteacher role is complete so I can ensure a smooth handover. Currently my teaching has been reduced by 1 day. After February half term it will change to 2 days and I will be completely out of class by Easter. I will have increased capacity out of class and will be able to produce productive handover sessions. ZN has currently increased her teaching days, other days we will book supply, or recruit for a fixed term contact to fill the gaps. We need to ensure good supply teachers and we are in communication with an agency to see if they can help us with that.

10. Pupil Premium and Sports Premium

FB Pupil Premium was reviewed by SS and TL, and uploaded on Gov Hub for Governors to read and the school website. It has been signed off.

Sports Premium, the Sports Funding is being used for a sports coach to supply PE in and after school and as part of our CPD programme for staff.

11. Governor Terms of Office

MH term ends on 18th July 2026

MC term ends on the 20th June 2026

The board considered the application of Elizabeth Galliver for the Parent Governor vacancy. As she was the only applicant there was no election. Governors agreed unanimously to move forward with her application. The board expressed its support for Elizabeth's potential contribution and noted that formal appointment will follow completion of required checks.

Action: RL to move forward with EG's application.

12. Finance

Full Finance Committee Minutes are on Gov Hub including a full breakdown of costs.

We gain additional funding from the first 20% children from their EHCPs.

Currently the school is £33,000 in surplus due to rebate payments from WB.

JC SBM has created a breakdown of maternity cost, etc.

SS Thank you to SBM for all her hard work.

13. Marketing

JC We will look at marketing after the Ofsted visit.

FB I would like to get a school prospectus drawn up. We can potentially cover the cost with help from the PSA and maybe reach out for sponsorship or advertising inside the prospectus.

JC This would be a good time to create the prospectus as we are in a positive position financial.

FB Could I ask for help in sourcing who can do the prospectus and look for sponsors?

TL Action: I can ask who Thorngrove School uses for their prospectus and ask around.

14. Safeguarding

Part 2 minutes

MC and FB have completed the safeguarding audit.

15. Natasha's Law

RL explained to the Governors about Natasha's Law (UK Food Information (Amendment) Regulations 2019), which came into force on 1 October 2021. It requires full ingredient lists and allergen labelling on all pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS) food and that the Governors have a responsibility to ensure that the food provider is adhering to the law. There was a lot of information on Gov Hub surrounding this from Radish, the school food provider.

Action: Governors to read the information and sign to show they have read it.

16. Governor Training.

Action: RL to book TL on Governor 1.

SS has completed Safer Recruitment

Action: JC to complete Safer Recruitment

Action: All Governors to complete online Safeguarding Training.

17. Policies

Uniform and RSE Policy

FB Governors must approve and regularly review the school's RSE policy because it is a statutory requirement under the 2019 Regulations. It's necessary that the Governors know how parents are being informed and what parts they can ask for their children not to participate in.

Uniform policies are not statutory, but governors must be informed and involved because uniform sits within their duties for cost, equality, behaviour, and policy oversight.

Both agreed with spelling changes.

Assessment Policy December 2025 – Agreed

Curriculum Policy November 2025 – Agreed

Finance Policy December 2025 – Agreed

Financial Management Policy December 2025 – Agreed

Online Safety Policy September 2025 – MH to review

Adverse Weather Policy January 2026 - Agreed

18. Hall partition

This was an idea of the SBM to try and create more room for the school. The quote was very expensive so it's now on a wish list rather than a necessary list. The other implication of the partition is that it would interrupt the flow of Muntjacs. If we were going to down that route we would need Governor's approval due to the cost.

Actions:

RL	Upload Minutes to the website	Complete
RL	TL on Governor 1.	Complete
JC	Complete Safer Recruitment	Complete
All	All Governors to complete online Safeguarding Training	
MH	Review Online Safety Policy September 2025	
All	Read information on Natasha's Law and tick they have read it	
TL	Ask Thorngrove School who they use for the prospectus	
FB/RL	To look at prospective sponsors in Inkpen	
RL	To move ahead with EG 's application	Complete
RL/SS	To research a Governors Report Template	Complete
RL	To see if a report can be pulled off Gov Hub	
FB	To advertise for an interim Head Teacher internally	Complete
SS	Update Governors Objectives	
RL	Put colour key at the bottom to Gov Dev Plan	
SS	Update Objective No 4	
SH/MH	SENCO Meeting	
SS	To add specific targets into Gov Dev Plan	