

## Hazeldown School Governing Body

Full Governing Body Committee Meeting – Part 1 Minutes					
Date/Time	2 April 2025				
Location	Hazeldown Primary School				
Chaired by	Dave Dawson				
Attendees		Role	Attendees	Init	Role
Dave Dawson	DD	LA, Chair	Tony Leney	TL	Parent
Stuart Ludford	SL	Headteacher	Matt Hallett	MH	Parent
Samantha Atkinson	SA	Co-opted			
Ruth Doughty	RD	Co-opted			

Apologies		Role
Ruth Walters	RW	Co-opted
Kelly Harnett	KHtt	Co-opted
Paul Hamilton	PH	Parent
Cloudi Lewis	CL	Parent

In Attendance		Role
Tim Synge	TS	Clerk
Kit Hardee	KHee	Associate Member

Minutes to
Attendees
School website

	Agenda	Led by
1	Apologies	Clerk
2	Declarations of interest	Clerk
3	Agree minutes of last meeting: 12 February 2025	Clerk
4	Matters arising from previous meeting: 12 February 2025	Clerk
5	Review terms of office	Clerk
6	Headteacher's Report	SL
7a	Portfolio report: Finance	SL
7b	Draft Budget 2025/26	SL
8	Portfolio Report: Safeguarding	RD
9	Portfolio Report: Personnel	DD
10	Portfolio report: Premises and Health & Safety	MH
11	Portfolio Report: Curriculum Portfolio	SA
12	Governor Visits	SA
13	Portfolio Report: Vulnerable Pupils	DD
14	Portfolio report: Community & Parent Links	TL
15	Policies for review and approval	Various
16	Governor Training	Various
17	Safeguarding Training	-
18	Hazeldown School Award Fund	DD
19	Impact from this meeting	DD
20	Next meeting	DD
21	AOB	Various

Item	Details of discussion		
1	<b>Apologies</b>  There were apologies from RW, PH, CL and KHtt. The meeting was chaired by DD.		
2	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  No Governor had any interests to declare in the business of the meeting.		
3	<b>Agree minutes of last meeting: 12 February 2025</b>  The minutes of the previous FGB meeting held on 12 February 2025 were agreed as a fair record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.		
4	<b>Matters arising from previous minutes: 12 February 2025</b>		
	FGB 24/10	Clerk to identify suitable Safeguarding Lead course for DD.	It was agreed that this would be dropped pending the regular annual review of portfolios and roles in September 2025.
	FGB 24/13	Clerk to include agenda item regarding reappointment of RW at March SIC meeting.	RW was re-appointed for a second term of office as a co-opted Governor at SIC on 19 March.
	FGB 24/14	Clerk to distribute Q Cards (20: Staff workload and wellbeing and 21: Headteacher work life balance and wellbeing) to Governors.	These were circulated by email on 13 Feb 2025
	FGB 24/15	Clerk to arrange for RD to attend next Chair's Forum in the place of DD.	Done: RD attended the February Chairs' Forum (see item 16).
5	<b>Review terms of office</b>  The Clerk reminded Governors that, following the re-appointment of RW as a co-opted Governor, there was a single vacancy on FGB for the role of Staff Governor. This would be re-advertised advised to all staff in the Summer Term.		
6	<b>Headteacher's Report</b>  DD thanked SL for an informative and wide-ranging report. DD highlighted various items in the Report. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DD observed that pupil numbers appeared to be holding up well. Unfortunately some of this appeared to be at the expense of other schools, with some parents looking to move their child(ren) from an existing local setting, however this was a positive for Hazeldown.</li> </ul>		

6	<p><b>Headteacher's Report (continued)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DD drew attention to TL's question: in relation to SL's commentary of academisation and federations, <b><i>TL had asked: "Are we saying that the current level of collaboration with other schools is sufficient and we aren't currently actively considering academisation or joining a federation?"</i></b> SL had replied: "We have never ruled out any of the options. Collaboration with other schools has changed since the academy agenda was first introduced and Local Learning Communities were no longer funded. The landscape is constantly changing e.g. most recently with the change to leadership at Devon being less academy-biased and the development of the maintained schools' heads group. This, and the significant 're-design' at DCC should provide more support between maintained schools which doesn't rely on the individuals in the DCC School Effectiveness Team. Any decision for formal partnership needs to be carefully considered to ensure it would be beneficial and would really deliver what is promised. Consideration needs to be based on many factors – enough collaboration being only one small part – is there a benefit financially, in terms of experiences for children, outcomes for children, conditions for staff, resourcing etc are all important. Overall, we are in a strong position at the moment, which has come from remaining a maintained school."</li> <li>• During further discussion on this topic, SL noted that the effect of the changes currently underway and planned at County would eventually become clear and a more informed review of options should then be possible. In the meantime, the establishment of the Maintained Schools' Heads Group appeared to be a positive step. DD noted the risk of diluting the Hazeldown ethos; it was apparent that many schools did not necessarily adhere to the same standards and aspirations as Hazeldown.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: Clerk to draw up Summer Term meeting agendas so that the SIC meeting in the first half of term can focus on review of the draft budget 2025/26 (prior to planned review/approval at the May FGB meeting; submission of the budget 2025/26 is now due in June) and a strategy session for further consideration of options around academisation and federations.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Clerk to recirculate Governance Today briefing materials and request from each Governor a question for addition to an agenda for the strategy session.</b></p> <p>SL provided some updates to his written report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to the new Site Manager moving to a full-time role, a review had been carried out with the cleaning team to look at cleaning products, simplify cleaning schedules and define clearly the approach taken in each type of room.</li> <li>• Devon County Council's new Inclusion and Learning Strategy 2025 was appended to the report; this appeared to be a reasonable statement of objectives and the School would monitor its implementation.</li> </ul>
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6	<p><b>Headteacher's Report (continued)</b></p> <p><b><i>MH asked about the trend of flexible working requests.</i></b> SL explained that these were becoming more prevalent. Working from home, popular in many sectors in recent years, was not a realistic option in schools, and this was an alternative sought by some staff, either to address genuine mental health issues or in seeking to achieve an improved work-life balance. The School had a legal duty to consider all such requests and could not make value judgements on individual requests, but was required to identify a genuine operational reason if it wished to turn down a request. Timetabling issues often proved to be a challenge. The School took advice from Devon HR in reaching a decision. Requests were frequently difficult to deal with.</p>
7a	<p><b>Portfolio Report: Finance</b></p> <p>As previously advised, DD reported that up-to-date financial reports could not be prepared as a result of ongoing third-party difficulties with the Bromcom MIS implementation. However, the SBM was working hard to track the likely 2024/25 position and was able to confirm that, based on the last known position and careful tracking of subsequent expenditure, the outturn would be broadly as expected. Within the figures, the supply budget was a challenging area; the School had operated its new control/review system for the whole year and variances were well understood. SL reported that four long-term staff absences over the last term had put pressure on the supply budget, however each case was being carefully monitored and progressed.</p> <p><b><i>RD suggested that the School might write to Devon County Council to express its concern at the lack of financial information and place on record the fact that it was consequently difficult for FGB to fulfil its statutory duty of receiving a financial report six times a year.</i></b> This suggestion was debated and Governors agreed that it was important to maintain good relations with Devon CC. DD then suggested contacting the Devon Association of Governance to find out their position and ascertain whether they intended to express concern on behalf of all Devon maintained schools.</p> <p><b>Action: DD to contact the Devon Association of Governance to identify actions taken and any recommendations for individual schools.</b></p>
7b	<p><b>Draft budget 2025/26</b></p> <p>As previously advised, the draft budget 2025/26 was not yet available due to ongoing third-party difficulties with the Bromcom MIS implementation. The Headteacher's Report contained a commentary on the key assumptions behind the draft budget and Governors reviewed these.</p> <p><b><i>SA asked for clarification on the proposed drop in the PAN (Published Admission Number).</i></b> SL confirmed that, in line with previous discussions, the financial strategy assumed a drop in numbers. It was anticipated that single-age classes could be retained for some time; this was a selling point for prospective parents. 45 in a year group was a financially viable figure. TL observed that Hazeldown was the only primary school in the area which was not obviously undertaking banner advertising in the town centre; this was a positive.</p>

7b	<p><b>Draft budget 2025/26 (continued)</b></p> <p>SL reminded Governors that the School had effectively started to incur expenditure against the budget 2025/26 from 1 April. It was important that Governors understood, and were content with, the key assumptions underlying the budget so that there were no surprises when the resulting figures were tabled next term. As noted, the School was doing all it could to track actual expenditure, however the carry-forward figure would not be known until next term and this would impact directly on the new budget. It should be confirmed in time for the planned draft budget review at SIC in May.</p> <p>SL ran through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• proposed cost increases (pay and other);</li> <li>• assumptions on pupil numbers;</li> <li>• decisions on teacher allocations;</li> <li>• a review and rebalancing of the SBM role to compensate for the loss of the separate DH and AH roles;</li> <li>• the PPA timetable;</li> <li>• sundry other areas of proposed expenditure;</li> <li>• an additional TLR allowance for the Curriculum Lead to bring this role in line with other Senior Leadership roles.</li> </ul> <p>The SBM anticipated that it should be possible to balance the 2026/27 (year two) budget, although there would be little headroom. This would become clear once the year-end figures were available.</p> <p><b><i>Following his attendance at the School's latest Eco Committee meeting (see also AOB) and related discussions on reducing consumption/expenditure, TL asked what consideration of strategic budgeting had taken place. Reductions in recurring expenditure may be achievable through one-off capital spend.</i></b> SL confirmed that this would be addressed in the Climate Action Plan. He explained that easy wins had already been actioned (eg cistern misers), but that the case for other developments, such as solar panels, taking into account wider environmental impacts, was less clear cut. Given that the School was not permitted to borrow, the funding had to come either from surpluses or from one-off funding. The School would also need to be clear on whether the objective was primarily financial or environmental.</p> <p><b><i>DD asked for an update on Little Acorns and Extended Schools finances.</i></b> SL reported that these were in reasonable health. Recharges from the School would be included among the topics for decision during the budget session at the next SIC.</p>
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8	<p><b>Portfolio report: Safeguarding</b></p> <p>DD thanked RD for her two reports and Governors noted the content of these.</p> <p>DD asked whether there were any urgent issues. SL described in outline one situation where the School had received notifications from Operation Encompass; this was currently being monitored by the School.</p> <p>RD will visit the School next term to look at pupil voice in relation to safeguarding.</p>												
9	<p><b>Portfolio Report: Personnel portfolio</b></p> <p>DD referred to the written portfolio report. He was pleased to see that staff sickness absence was starting to return to a more “normal” profile.</p> <p>DD described an issue he had observed relating to gate security. SL confirmed that the School was following this up.</p>												
10	<p><b>Portfolio Report: Premises and Health &amp; Safety</b></p> <p>DD thanked MH for his report which was useful and informative. MH drew attention to the incident he had described involving a coach breakdown on a dual carriageway. <b><i>How would the School provide feedback to staff on this?</i></b> SL confirmed that it would be a topic for a forthcoming twilight session with staff.</p> <p>In relation to the incident, the actions and reactions of staff involved had been exemplary. For example, they had told attending police officers that they would not follow usual practice and vacate the stationary coach to seek refuge off the carriageway until the road had been closed to traffic, on account of the age of the children on board. Police had assented to this course of action and had stopped all traffic while the children disembarked. Governors were impressed with the professional response and decisions of the members of staff involved.</p>												
11	<p><b>Portfolio Report: Curriculum</b></p> <p>DD introduced SA’s portfolio report and said that this reflected well on the work of the new Curriculum Lead. SA confirmed that the Curriculum Lead’s desire to improve is clear and she was engaging with pupils in a positive way. She had already achieved much and had plans to do more.</p>												
12	<p><b>Governor Visits programme 2024/25</b></p> <p>DD reported that PH is planning his visit now and that he will report next term. SA’s work was included in her portfolio report for this term and would also be touched on next term.</p> <table><tr><td>Spring 1</td><td>Key Themes</td><td>SA</td></tr><tr><td>Spring 2</td><td>Writing across the School</td><td>PH</td></tr><tr><td>Summer 1</td><td>End Points</td><td>DD</td></tr><tr><td>Summer 2</td><td>Books and Pupil Voice across the curriculum</td><td>RW</td></tr></table>	Spring 1	Key Themes	SA	Spring 2	Writing across the School	PH	Summer 1	End Points	DD	Summer 2	Books and Pupil Voice across the curriculum	RW
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Summer 2	Books and Pupil Voice across the curriculum	RW											

13	<p><b>Portfolio Report: Vulnerable Pupils</b></p> <p>DD introduced the portfolio report in the absence of RW and CL and thanked them for their work. It was important that Governors continued to meet with pupils during their visits, as this was an important opportunity to observe practice in School to back up reports received during meetings.</p>
14	<p><b>Portfolio Report: Community &amp; Parent Links</b></p> <p>DD thanked TL for an excellent report. TL reported that the recent PTA quiz evening had been a success. He drew attention to one or two “dead” URLs on the School website and SL confirmed that these would be investigated. This could be an issue with content uploaded by staff, but it was also possible that the problem lay with website host School Spider or with third-party websites.</p>
15	<p><b>Policies for approval</b></p> <p>Governors considered the policies which were due for approval at this meeting. All had been made available on OneDrive for the previous two weeks.</p> <p>Governors had approved the SEND Policy and the SEND Information Report at FGB on 12 February 2025.</p> <p>DD had reviewed the IT Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement (Staff) and recommended this for approval.</p> <p><b>Decision: FGB approved the IT Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement (approval date: 2 April 2025).</b></p> <p><b>Action: Clerk to establish with KHtt the current state of review of the Whistleblowing Policy and the Recruitment and Selection Policy.</b></p> <p>SL reported that the School had adopted a new CCTV Policy (based on a SchoolPro template. He recommended that this be added to the list of policies for which review was delegated to SLT and Governors accepted this. <b><i>MH suggested that the “reasonable period” for retention of CCTV footage be extended to 31 days.</i></b> SL agreed to look at this.</p>
16	<p><b>Governor Training</b></p> <p>Governors reviewed the summary of recent training undertaken and forthcoming training.</p> <p>RD had attended the Chairs Forum on SEND in Devon; the overriding message was the Devon did not have sufficient funds for SEND.</p> <p><b>Action: Clerk to book DD onto the next Chairs’ Forum.</b></p> <p>RD had attended a course on EDI. This was not, as the title implied, a session of EDI for governing bodies, but had nevertheless been interesting.</p> <p><b>Action: SLT to review the School website to ensure that there is suitable diversity apparent in photographs.</b></p>

16	<p><b>Governor Training (continued)</b></p> <p>TL had attended a Governor induction session. This was a face-to-face session and had been very informative. He reported that there had been some discussion of the right of any parent to attend a meeting of the governing body as an observer. RD reflected that this would change the nature of a meeting considerably. No-one present had heard of an instance of a parent in any school choosing to do this.</p> <p><b>Action: Clerk to re-book induction course for MH.</b></p>
17	<p><b>Safeguarding Training</b></p> <p>Session held at FGB1 each term.</p>
18	<p><b>Hazeldown Award Fund</b></p> <p>DD had signed cheques for the agreed expenditures. He asked SL to remind staff of the procedure to be followed when requesting a grant from the Award Fund.</p>
19	<p><b>Impact from this meeting</b></p> <p>DD summarised this as a positive meeting in which the positivity of SLT and staff in difficult circumstances was apparent. Governors were aware that the leadership team continued to rise to the challenges.</p>
20	<p><b>Next Meeting(s)</b></p> <p>Meetings in Summer Term 2025 are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SIC: 7 May 2025 – this will include a strategy session on academisation and federation along with consideration of the draft budget 2025/26.</li> <li>• FGB: 21 May 2025 – review of the March data drop will be deferred to this meeting. The budget 2025/26 will be tabled for approval.</li> <li>• Extra meeting (provisional): 2 July 2025 – <i>it is not yet clear whether this session will be required.</i></li> <li>• FGB: 16 July 2025</li> </ul>
21	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>TL reported on his recent attendance at a meeting of the School's Eco Committee. They were applying for a Green Flag Award. The meeting had been well attended and enthusiastic. The Committee was run by a member of staff supported by four parent volunteers. <b><i>Should the Governing Body add environmental sustainability to a portfolio for September 2025?</i></b> Governors agreed that this should be considered. TL intended to attend further meetings.</p>



21	<p><b>AOB (continued)</b></p> <p>MH reported on the presentation by the Forest School Lead on her work in Romania. This was a fascinating talk.</p> <p>DD reminded Governors of key dates for the Summer Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SATs would be on 12-15 May and Governor attendance, especially at the start-of-day set up, was valuable.</li> <li>- Subject Leader conversations were on 11-12 June.</li> </ul> <p>Governors who wished to support these events should contact SL or KHee with availability/preferences.</p> <p><b>Action: Clerk to circulate SATs timetable to Governors.</b></p>
	The meeting ended at 8:30pm.

Summary of decisions and proposed actions		
<i>Actions</i>		
FGB 24/13	Clerk to draw up Summer Term meeting agendas so that the SIC meeting in the first half of term can focus on review of the draft budget 2025/26 (prior to planned review/approval at the May FGB meeting; submission of the budget 2025/26 is now due in June) and a strategy session for further consideration of options around academisation and federations.	Clerk
FGB 24/14	Clerk to recirculate Governance Today briefing materials and request from each Governor a question for addition to an agenda for the strategy session.	Clerk
FGB 24/15	DD to contact the Devon Association of Governance to identify actions taken and any recommendations for individual schools [in relation to current lack of financial data available from Bromcom MIS].	DD
FGB 24/16	Clerk to establish with KHtt the current state of review of the Whistleblowing Policy and the Recruitment and Selection Policy.	Clerk
FGB 24/17	Clerk to book DD onto the next Chairs' Forum.	Clerk
FGB 24/18	SLT to review the School website to ensure that there is suitable diversity apparent in photographs.	SL/KHee
FGB 24/19	Clerk to re-book induction course for MH.	Clerk
FGB 24/20	Clerk to circulate SATs timetable to Governors.	Clerk

Summary of decisions and proposed actions (continued)		
<i>Decisions</i>		
15	FGB approved the IT Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement (approval date: 2 April 2025).	

These minutes are agreed by those present as being a true record.	
Signed (Chair of Committee)	Date