Ellingham & Woodton Primary Schools Federation

'To love our neighbour, enabling everyone to flourish and reach their full potential.'
Our inspiration comes from Luke 10:27

Full Governing Board Meeting

Thursday 20 November 2025 at 6.00pm
Microsoft Teams

Minutes

Present:
Diane Perry-Yates DPY (Chair of Governors)
Dawn Thomas DT (Headteacher)
Alison Snelling AS
Vicky Wood VW
Rob Grimm RG
Terry Jones TJ

Apologies:
Julie Pickering JP

In Attendance:
Christopher Perry-Yates CPY (Governance Professional)
Charlene Taylor CT (RE Lead)

Item No.	Item and discussion	Owner	Target Date
1.	**Register of Attendance and Apologies** Apologies had been received from Julie Pickering. All other governors were present and accepted these apologies. The Governance Professional advised that the meeting was quorate.		
2.	**Declaration of pecuniary and business interests:** There were no new pecuniary interests declared.		
3.	**Curriculum presentations:** ***RE*** Governors were advised that there would be a SIAMS inspection on 25 November 2025 for Ellingham CE VC Primary School. The RE Lead advised that the RE curriculum was well established in the schools and staff were aware of the big topics that were to be delivered. This was a subject where there was a high level of confidence. Books Looks were going well and showing progress. The work overall was high quality and addressed the learning in the Nutshells. Governors were advised that RE visits and visitors to the school had increased for the current academic year. The range of guest speakers was		

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	highlighted to the governing board. Visits were also planned to Norwich Cathedral and Westminster Cathedral. It was highlighted that the school had previously achieved a Silver REQM and there were plans in place to achieve the Gold award. Governors were advised that pupil voice was strong and children cold talk openly about the visits that they had had and the guest speakers. Children had indicated that they wanted more visits and more art-based activities within lessons. Staff were booked on to CPD opportunities for RE development. It was explained that nest steps included working on confidence in assessment of RE and raising the profile of RE within the wider Federation community. Celebrations of Faith Days would be shared on newsletters, social media and other sources of communication. The range of visits and visitors would also be increased. The quality of teaching in RE would be monitored to ensure consistency. Q(DPY): What is involved in achieving the Gold REQM award? A: When we first applied, we had support from Chris Allen at the Diocese. There were three strands involved and there are 7 areas within each strand. We were solidly Silver and dipping into Gold in a couple of areas including teaching. The target is to stretch ourselves in terms of sharing our knowledge with the wider community. For the leadership section, attending more CPD will allow us to achieve more. ***Collective Worship*** The Executive Headteacher advised that the Federation continued to use a value each half-term. The current value was challenge. Collective Worship focused on each value. At Ellingham and Woodton there was a values focus. In Tuesdays the class assemblies were a reflection on the values so that all of the community understood the value for the week and children had a chance to reflect through retrieval. Recently we took children through the creation story, and the children created a wheel demonstrating what happened on each day as God created the world. It was noted that the vicar usually visited the schools on Wednesday's. On Thursdays there were big questions and on Fridays there was celebration. The DHT ensured that all values were covered and key Christian events were covered. It was highlighted that the Federation used GERS (Gather Engage Respond and Send) to plan Collective Worship. Floor books recorded Collective Worship activity, the stories that were in assemblies. The Lord's Prayer was also part of Collective Worship. It was noted that during a visit to the Cathedral the children had joined in with The Lord's Prayer. Governors were advised that next steps were to continue developing the floor books and to use more prayers from the children in Collective		

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	Worship. ***Spirituality*** The Executive Headteacher advised that in 2023 there had been a professional development day to start the process of addressing spirituality. It was highlighted that this was about awe and wonder. The Federation had built on this to create a shared policy which was being proposed to governors. The policy outlined the approach of Windows, Mirrors and Doors. It was explained that the Federation had held a Collective Worship to introduce the concept of spirituality and the Mirrors, Windows and Doors approach. A staff meeting had been held to create a list of where the spirituality opportunities were in the curriculum. The SIAMS inspector was aware of the process the school was following. The Nest in the outdoor space was also being developed in line with the theme of Windows, Mirrors and Doors. It was highlighted that the next steps were to reach out to parent with spirituality guidance. Vocabulary guidance would also be developed and there would be annual spirituality days.		
4.	**Minutes of the previous meeting on 2 October 2025:** The minutes of the previous meeting on 2 October 2025 were reviewed. It was agreed that these were a true record, and they were signed by the Chair. **Proposed: DPY Seconded: TJ**		
5.	**Matters arising from the last meeting:** The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed. <u>AP1: All governors to make their declarations on GovernorHub</u> This had been completed. Action closed. <u>AP2: Governance Professional to send the parent governor pack to the Executive Headteacher</u> This had been circulated. There had been Action closed. <u>AP3: Circulate Link Governor role descriptions</u> This had been completed. Action closed. <u>AP4: Governance Professional to circulate the HTPM training to RG</u> This had been completed. Action closed. <u>AP5: RG to liaise with the Executive Headteacher to arrange a Health & Safety Walk</u>		

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	This was yet to be arranged. Action ongoing. <u>AP6: Chair of Governors to circulate a governor monitoring plan</u> This had been completed. Action closed. <u>AP7: Governance Professional to amend the start times of future meetings</u> This had been completed. Action closed.		
6.	**Chair's Actions:** The Chair of Governors advised that he had not carried out any actions on behalf of the governing board since the previous meeting.		
7.	**Executive Headteacher's report:** The governing board reviewed the Executive Headteacher's report. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes. Q(DPY): Ellingham - Sparrows have only 9 children in the class and are supported by 1 teacher and 1 TA. How is this structured and moving forward into next academic year Skylarks will reduce to 20? A: They are deployed at different points to support other teachers. The structure will be reviewed once we know our numbers for sure. Q(DPY): Swallows with 15 in Y6 leaving in July what are the planned class structures for next year? A: This will be reviewed once we know the numbers. Q(DPY): At Woodton it would be useful to know what number of children in each class would make the school balance its budget. A: Each child is worth £3,760 without Pupil Premium and Sport Premium. We were doing alright when we had 55, so about another 10 pupils would be needed based on today's costs. Q(DPY): Ellingham – Are the 21 SEND pupils registered at Ellingham across all 4 classes or does one class have more than the others? With almost a quarter of the pupils (10) registering under SEND, does the same apply for Woodton? A: At Ellingham there are more in Upper KS2 and at Woodton they are in the earlier years. Q(DPY): Pupil Premium – what % of the Pupil Premium budget is spent on TA and Staffing and how do we know it is value for money? How do you measure the impact?		

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	A: There is 2 TA supported by 50% Pupil Premium and 1 x 50% Sport Premium. Pupil Premium covers interventions in the classrooms to help disadvantaged pupisl to catch up. At Woodton all TA are 80% covered. MSA are also paid through Sports Premium as they help with provision at lunchtime. Q(DPY): At Ellingham the drop in income year on year appears to be due mainly on pupil numbers 93 / 88 / 85 what marketing plans do we have? A: We have produced flyers and held open evenings and had Play and Saty with their parents. Ellingham was well attended but at Woodton there were only two visits. One more open evening would be provided. We are outward facing on social media and proposing what we are doing. Word of mouth is also very strong.		
8.	**Resources items:** ***a) Budget Revision 2 (BR2)*** The governing board reviewed the BCR for September 2025 for each school. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes. Q(DPY): E01 – Are year on year staffing costs rising in line with expected pay increases? Is this the reason for the increases? A: Yes, these are all factored into the budget at County level. It is all estimated but usually they are correct within a 1% / 2%. They are looking at 6% over 3 years at the moment. Q(DPY): E02 - supply is predicted to be £500 in years 2 and 3. As the expenditure is £2,362 so far in this year, is this realistic? A: No, we will need to increase this in years 2 and 3 as we are relying on TA cover. We kept it lower for the budget revision. In previous years it has not been anywhere near that amount. At Ellingham we have part-time teachers, and they can claim overtime for PD days. Q(DPY): E19 – Learning Resources show a reduction in year 2 and a rise in year 3 although an overall reduction of around £3K from the current financial year. Is this a realistic figure based on the reduction of pupils? A: These are balance of Sport Premium money to be allocated as and when, it is mainly to show the expenditure of the funding and to be spent as and when required. These can be amended year on year if required. Q(DPY): Overall – Year on year we are spending more than we are getting in and therefore year 3 is showing a significant loss of £65,174 (11.24%) what measures will you put in place to balance income		

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	against expenditure? A: Unfortunately, it will be redundancies and a cut in hours across the board, or a change in staffing. This is unless we are able to get more children on role. This would obviously be a last resort. It will depend on pupil numbers and staff numbers. It is looking like a restructure. The Chair of Governors highlighted that having spoken to County it was important for the Federation to make decisions about staffing structures rather than having County involvement. It was noted that there were many schools in a similar position of a reduced surplus due to falling rolls and costs increasing. The Executive Headteacher advised that she was planning to get advice from County HR. It was noted that any process of staff restructure may involve some natural solutions. Governors noted that there were planned housing developments in Woodton which could be used as a case to keep the school open. Q (TJ): Is there a timeframe to work to in order to retain absolute control? A: To make us financially viable we would need to move to two classes in Woodton from 2026. If there are low admissions at Ellingham we may need to restructure too. We would need to start consultations early in the Spring term. Q(DPY): Woodton – Measures taken to correct the overspend / deficit in the budget year 2 and 3 show a balanced budget. Can you explain the measures you are planning to take? A: Decreasing to two classes, a Teacher and a Teaching Assistant redundancy is necessary as a result of fall in pupil numbers and the class reduction. Q (RG): At Ellingham there is a figure of £10k for gas and electricity which is flat across years 2 and 3. Do you not factor increases? A: This year they came down slightly and there will be a surplus. We will have to continue monitoring this. Q (RG): Do we get any income from the wind turbine? A: It is currently out of action and needing repair. To decommission or repair it is several thousand pounds. We have heard that we will get an income from it. We used to feed into the main feed and received an income. If we can get the wind turbine up and running then we would receive an income. Q (RG): Can we get any grants for this? A: We may be able to use capital but would need to apply for grants to.		

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	Governors recommended applying to Aviva for funding. ***b) Capital BCR (Budget Control Report)*** Governors were advised that County were advising that it was not possible to de-capitalise funds from the capital funding that had been ringfenced for a third classroom at Woodton. The Chair of Governors, School Business Manager and Executive Headteacher were still attempting to identify ways to de-capitalise. ***c) Summer Term RAG rating*** It was noted that the Summer Term RAG had not been received. ***d) Premises and Health & Safety update*** It was agreed that a Health & Safety monitoring visit would be undertaken.		
9.	**SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools):** ***a) In what ways do teaching and learning help pupils to flourish academically and personally?*** The Executive Headteacher advised that each half-term was underpinned by a value and this linked to the learning in the curriculum. The curriculum ensured building on knowledge and skills to ensure that children were ready for the next stage on their journey. The school was also. School of Sanctuary and took part in Black History month. Children's horizons were being widened to give a wider outlook of their place in the world. The protected characteristics were protected. The Federation was also an eco-school and involved. in the local community. Governors reflect on the vision and its impact on the curriculum. There were visits to the cathedral and other visits. ***b) How do staff support pupils to develop perseverance, resilience, and creativity in their learning?*** Staff encourage children to 'have a go'. There is a growth mindset in the Federation. Pupils were encouraged to develop a sense of success. Collective Worship explored resilience as part of the half-termly values. Art and DT were also linked to RE and children were encouraged to think creatively and solve problems. ***c) How is Collective Worship linked to the curriculum and wider learning?*** The Executive Headteacher advised that this had been covered earlier on the agenda.		
10.	**Headteacher's Performance Management (HTPM):** The Chair of Governors advised that the HTPM process had been successfully carried out on 5 November 2025 with the support of an external consultant from VNET.		
11.	**Published Admission Number (PAN):** The Chair of Governors advised that schools were currently being invited to Area PAN meetings. These gave information on the catchment areas and		

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	the number of children who were likely to become school age which showed that there were more school places available than the number of children within the catchment of each school. It was highlighted that the Local Authority were looking for schools to work together to reduce their PAN to allow some smaller schools to remain open. Governors agreed that the it was the responsibility of the LA to make the decisions about the number of school places. Governors agreed to retain the PAN of 7 at Woodton and a PAN of 12 at Ellingham. **Proposed: DPY Seconded: VW** **All voted in favour with no abstentions.**		
12.	**School Improvement and Development Plan (SIDP) progress report:** The governing board reviewed the SIDP. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes. The Executive Headteacher advised that all was on track to meet the priorities in the SIDP. Monitoring of handwriting was the main focus as well as the development of spirituality.		
13.	**Policies reviews:** The governing board reviewed the following policies. Copies had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes. ***a) Looked After Children (LAC) and Post-LAC Policy*** There were only minor changes. ***b) Feedback and Marking Policy*** There were only minor changes. ***c) Spirituality Policy*** This was a new policy. The policies listed were approved and adopted *en bloc*. **Proposed: DPY Seconded: VW** **All voted in favour with no abstentions.**		
14.	**Governor monitoring plans and schedule:** The governing board reviewed the draft monitoring schedule. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes. TJ advised that he had organised a SEND monitoring visit. The Chair of Governors advised that she was arranging a visit to both schools to monitor safeguarding and Pupil Premium.		

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15.	**Governor CPD:** The Chair of Governors advised that she had attended Budget Revision 2, VNET training regarding the Headteacher and Chair of Governors and also Safeguarding for Governors Refresher training. RG advised that he had attended HTPM training. TJ advised that he had attended SEND training. VW advised that she was booked to attend several finance courses.		
16.	**Governing Board correspondence:** The Chair of Governors advised that there had been correspondence from the Local Authority regarding undertaking a governance observation as part of the Quality Assurance process being delivered by the Local Authority. The Executive Headteacher advised that a letter had been received from the LA regarding outcomes at Woodton Primary. It was noted that as numbers were low at Woodton, one more child would improve outcomes. After a meeting the LA had identified that the Federation was putting all measures for improvement in place and knew all children and what they needed.		
17.	**Items deemed confidential:** There was one item discussed that has been recorded as a Part 2 Confidential Minute relating to pay progressions. *[AS and VW left the meeting at 6.34pm]* **ACTION: Governance Professional to circulate Part 2 Confidential Minutes to non-staff governors for approval.**	CPY	30/11/25
18.	**Reflection: How have our discussions today enabled the children and staff to flourish and reach their full potential:** • Reviewed the provision of RE and spirituality. • Agreed a budget to support both schools in difficult times.		
19.	**Date of next meeting:** 22 January 2026 at 5.00pm at Ellingham Primary.		

Meeting closed at 7.42pm

Action log:

Item No.	Action Description	Owner	Target
17	AP1: Governance Professional to circulate Part 2 Confidential Minutes	CPY	17/01/26

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	to non-staff governors for approval.		

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