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 22 January 2026 at 5.00pm
Ellingham CE VC Primary School

Minutes

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

Apologies:
Vicky Wood VW (School Support Manager)

In Attendance:
Christopher Perry-Yates CPY (Governance Professional)
Sarah Querelle SQ (Deputy Headteacher)

Item No.	Item and discussion	Owner	Target Date
1.	**Register of Attendance and Apologies** Apologies had been received from Vicky Wood. 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:** ***Writing*** The governing board received a verbal report. Governors were advised that the Literacy Tree was well embedded with good progress evidenced. Further work was being put into place on progression of books for reading which were broad and balanced. Spelling Shed and handwriting were in place in all classes and dictation was being used. In Reception there was a trial of Little Wandle Handwriting and Drawing Club. It was noted that VNET were supporting the Federation with Writing.		

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	Online Safety and Computing The governing board received a verbal report. Governors were advised that the children were demonstrating stronger knowledge than was being taught. They were very strong with coding and there was investigation into strengthening the curriculum. The Executive Headteacher advised that there was a need to look into strengthening the CPD of the teaching staff. Q(DPY): What is being done in response to AI? A: This is not a focus at the moment, but it is coming. Governors were advised that each half-term children were given a safety lesson which was on a cycle and showed progression. There had not been any safeguarding concerns. There was evidence that children's knowledge was improving and parents were aware of the nee sot be vigilant at home. Q(DPY): What is in place for filtering systems? A: This is handled through School Broadband in association with JC Comtech. I have a report every day which allows me to see what people have been looking at. There had been one issue associated with radicalisation in the previous academic year which was reported to Prevent. It was noted that next steps were for every KS2 child to have their own email address. There were still some systems without individual logins which was a risk. It was agreed that it would be useful to have JC Comtech talk to governors about what cybersecurity measures were in place at the Federation. **ACTION: Executive Headteacher to investigate the potential of JC Comtech speaking to governors about Cybersecurity measures.** Q (RG): What is the Federation doing about minimising screen-time? Some of this is using online tools such as Spelling Shed. A: It is still taught offline in school. Teachers are more conscious about having time off the equipment. iPads are not used as much as they used to be. It is more for short periods of 10 minutes. Government is talking about limiting screen-time for children under 5. It is about balancing use positively to help them move on as a tool. ***Schools of Sanctuary*** The governing board received a verbal update on the Schools of Sanctuary engagement. Governors were advised that the Federation needed to reapply for accreditation as it had expired. Activities included a sponsored walk and raising money for Welcome Wheels which gave bicycles to refugees. School	DT	28/02/26

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	Councils would be linked to the Schools of Sanctuary award and support Save the Children. Literacy Tree books were being broadened to ensure a focus on inclusion. Q (JP): Do you link with schools in Africa? A: We used to do this. We want to work with the School Councils to get them involved in decisions. Governors noted the importance of ensuring an understanding of inclusion including diversity and equality, particularly in small rural Norfolk schools. ***History*** The governing board received a verbal History report. Quote: We are not makers of history we are made by history Third year of using Kapow scheme. There was a mixed planning system in place and curriculum was in line with the age plans. Staff feedback from Kapow was positive. Standalone units were used to avoid repetition. Curriculum leader time had been used to analyse data. The majority of children were working towards Expected Standard (EXS) or above. There were 5 out of 13 pupils that were targeted to push to EXS with pre-teaching or intervention. At Woodton most were at EXS or above and those working below had support for additional needs. Professional reading was included. In History the focus would be on chronological understanding and disciplinary skills. Historical Association was used for ideas d background reading as well as blogs. It was reported that wider and whole school projects included Norwich Castle, Strangers Hall and local visits. This was linked across the curriculum with Geography. Governors were advised that eh recent 160 birthday of Ellingham was celebrated and history was tied into this with an exhibition of the past of the school. Q (RG): Is any of the history still on the walls? A: All children made a clay tile to celebrate the birthday of the school which would be displayed. Q(DPY): Was this in the paper? A: It was sent to the newspapers, but we have not seen an article yet. **ACTION: Executive Headteacher to follow up with local press regarding Ellingham birthday celebration articles.**	DT	28/02/26

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	Next steps were to support pupils with SEND and EDI. Each history unit was ensuring retrieval practice. Q(DPY): How do you test retention? A: We go back on slides from the previous unit or pick out words or themes from before to ensure it is embedded. Kapow is set up to ensure that knowledge is embedded. It was noted that specific pupils were being targeted with pre-teaching and home study to achieve the maximum number of children at EXS. ***Art*** The governing board received a verbal Art report. Governors were advised that the Kapow schemes were also used for Art. This had helped build confidence in the teaching or Art. Quote: You can't use up creativity, the more you use the more you have. It was noted that the Federation was in its third year of the new curriculum for Art. The curriculum was updated over time. At Ellingham the majority of children were at EXS securely. The small percentage below standard were with medical needs and SEND input. There was progress showing in the data. At Ellingham there were some children who were heading to Greater Depth Standard (GDS). At Woodton all children were at EXS, and another was at GDS. Year 2 to 4 were at 100% EXS and the school was pushing to achieve GDS. Broader creative opportunities were being developed in line with Ofsted expectations. Access Art UK was a charity offering CPD and webinars that the Art Lead engaged with. Educational visits included Norwich Castle Museum. Wider school projects included art-based activities that enhanced the learning environment and artwork during seasonal events continued including involvement in decorating local Christmas trees (including Hungate in Beccles). Governors were advised that there was a cluster event around Van Gogh's Sunflowers. Each year group did still life or watercolour paintings. Workshops with local artists were also participated in. Art was also mixed with the history curriculum. Next steps included investigating GDS in Art at Ellingham. Governors noted that there was very good behaviour at the Ellingham birthday celebration event.		
4.	**Minutes of the previous meeting on 20 November 2025:** The minutes of the previous meeting on 20 November 2025 were reviewed. It was agreed that these were a true record, and they were signed by the Chair.		

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	Proposed: DPY Seconded: AS The Part 2 Confidential minutes of the meeting on 20 November 2025 were reviewed. It was agreed that these were a true record, and they were signed by the Chair. **Proposed: DR Seconded: JP**		
5.	**Matters arising from the last meeting:** The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed. <u>AP1: Governance Professional to circulate Part 2 Confidential Minutes to non-staff governors for approval.</u> The Governance Professional advised that these had been uploaded to a. confidential folder on GovernorHub. Action closed.		
6.	**Chair's Actions:** There had been no Chairs Actions 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): What will be the impact of the lower numbers coming into Reception with Year 6 children leaving. A: It is likely that we will be looking at combining some classes. The larger classes are at the top end of the school. Q(DPY): Do we know how many first choices there are? A: I haven't looked at the latest figures. Q (RG): Has the school considered running pre-school provision? A: We have but it can have a negative impact on the budget as a lot of schools are over supporting the nursery / pre-school afloat and this can put pressure on the budget. The Chair of Governors advised that there was a government and Local Authority directive that schools needed to produce surplus budgets and reduce deficits. Q (RG): Do we know what predicted numbers are like in future years? A: They are lower.		

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	The Chair of Governors highlighted that the Local Authority was holding a series of pupil planning area meetings due to the decreasing birthrate and the oversupply of school places. Q(DPY): What are the implications of having an apprentice teacher? A: They are in their 6-week period of an alternative school, and we have the apprentice from the other school. The impact has been that as Executive Headteacher I have had to teach more. Contact time commitments had been honoured. This had ensured continuity for the children through my teaching. Q(DPY): What has been the impact of the phased return at Woodton? A: This has impacted on the Deputy Headteacher and School Support Officer covering the reception duties. Q(DPY): SEND figures remain high at both schools. What is done to support this? A: We have 23% at both schools which is above the national average of 19% including Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). We have further pupils who are being assessed for EHCPs. There is a total of 4 which will take us to 9% EHCP which is above the national average of 5.3%. We support children well and we have parents for next September enquiring for spaces as we support SEND well. The Deputy Headteacher advised that Graduated Provision Maps (GPM) were being revisited to highlight the needs. It was highlighted that any funding put into place did not cover the costs associated with the support provided. Q(DPY): Who is coming to work on the courtyard? A: This is someone from NPS (Norfolk Property Services). Q(DPY): Are we on track with the Pupil Premium spending? A: Yes.		
8.	**Resources items:** ***Budget Revision 3 (BR3)*** The governing board reviewed BR3. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes. The Executive Headteacher advised that the Woodton budget was in surplus for three years which included a reduction of one class. Ellingham was in deficit for Year 3 and this would require the reduction of one class. Governors noted the pressures on the budget figures due to lower anticipated pupil forecasts.		

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	Q (TJ): When will decisions need to be made? A: For September 2026 there will be changes at Woodton. For Ellingham it will be budgeted for the future. **IT WAS RESOLVED** to adopt Budget Revision 3 for Ellingham. **Proposed: DPY Seconded: JP** **IT WAS RESOLVED** to adopt Budget Revision 3 for Woodton. **Proposed: TJ Seconded: RG** ***Budget Control Report (BCR)*** The governing board reviewed the latest BCR. A copy had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes. ***Plans for completion of Schools Financial Value Standards (SFVS)*** The Chair of Governors agreed to complete the SFVS with the School Support Manager. **ACTION: Arrange completion of the SFVS with the School Support Manager.** ***Health and Safety report*** The governing board were advised that the Executive Headteacher and Link Governor had carried out a premises review. The link governor was due to complete the checklists and finalise the monitoring report. **ACTION: Complete the Health & Safety monitoring report for Ellingham and arrange a visit to Woodton.** ***Premises report*** It was agreed that this had been covered under the Executive Headteacher report.	DPY RG	23/02/26 28/02/26
9.	**Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS):** The governing board reviewed the SIAMS report from Ellingham. Copies had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes. The result of the inspection was commended by all governors.		
10.	**School Improvement and Development Plan (SIDP) progress:** The governing board reviewed the updated SIDP. Copies had been circulated prior to the meeting and can be found filed with these minutes. The Executive Headteacher advised that progress was on track. There was more focus needed on eSafety with a lot of work on improving Writing.		

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	Q (RG): Is there homework that can be given for Writing? A: Yes, but research and our experiences show that there is not a high level of return. EEF (Education Endowment Fund) also says that homework does not provide a lot of impact.		
11.	**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) Business Continuity*** The Executive Headteacher advised that there were no major changes. ***b) Staff Discipline and Conduct Policy*** The Executive Headteacher advised that there were no major changes. It was decided that the option for dismissal should be with one or more governors with the headteacher. ***c) Educational Visit Policy*** The Executive Headteacher advised that there were no major changes. ***d) Homework Policy*** The Executive Headteacher advised that there were no major changes. ***e) Online Safety Policy*** The Executive Headteacher advised that there were no major changes. The policies listed were approved and adopted *en bloc*. **Proposed: DPY Seconded: AS** **All voted in favour with no abstentions.**		
12.	**Governor Monitoring plans and reports:** Governors reviewed the monitoring report submitted by the SEND Link Governor. It was noted that the Health & Safety Link Governor had carried out a monitoring visit to Ellingham and a visit was planned to Woodton.		
13.	**Governor CPD:** The Chair of Governors advised that she had undertaken Safer Recruitment training and attended the Budget Revision 3. There were three finance workshops also booked. TJ advised that he had viewed a cybersecurity webinar on 21 January 2026. JP advised that she had attended Budget Revision 3.		

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14.	**Governing Board correspondence:** There had been no correspondence since the previous meeting.		
15.	**Governor recruitment:** It was agreed to defer this to the next meeting.		
16.	**Items deemed confidential:** There were no items deemed confidential.		
17.	**Reflection: How have our discussions today enabled the children and staff to flourish and reach their full potential:** • Agreed a strong budget revision 3 and discussed the changes needed to ensure the longevity of the Federation. • Received an overview of a variety of subject areas.		
18.	**Date of next meeting:** 12 March 2026 at 5pm, Woodton Primary.		

Meeting closed at 7.13pm

Action log:

Item No.	Action Description	Owner	Target Date
3	AP1: Executive Headteacher to investigate the potential of JC Comtech speaking to governors about Cybersecurity measures.	DT	28/02/26
3	AP2: Executive Headteacher to follow up with local press regarding Ellingham birthday celebration articles.	DT	28/02/26
8	AP3: Arrange completion of the SFVS with the School Support Manager.	DPY	23/02/26
8	AP4: Complete the Health & Safety monitoring report for Ellingham and arrange a visit to Woodton.	RG	28/02/26

Signed: ……..