



We are a welcoming, caring and stimulating school. We inspire a love of learning by nurturing potential, fun and happiness. We celebrate our success as we achieve high standards in all aspects of life; allowing children to grow spiritually, morally and socially within a strong Christian ethos.

"I have come in order that you may have life – life in all its fullness"
John 10:10

ELVINGTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
Minutes of the meeting of an additional Full Governing Body held on
Tuesday 6th May 2025 at 6pm

Present Andrew Buttery (Headteacher) Dave Brett (Virtual)
 Ben Calverley (Acting Chair) Colean Camp
 Joseph Freeman (Virtual) Laura McGouran *arrived 6:07pm*

In Attendance Caroline Rigden (Governance Support Officer / Clerk)
 Nicola Jolly (School Business manager)

		ACTION
1.	<u>Welcome and Opening Prayer</u> Unfortunately, both the Chair and Vice Chair were unable to attend so governors agreed that Ben Calverley would act as Chair. He welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting opened in prayer led by the Headteacher.	
2.	<u>Apologies for absence and declarations of interest</u> Apologies were received, with consent, from Charlotte Palmer, Katy McCaffrey, Bruce Cole, and Sam Ware. There were no declarations of interest.	
3.	<u>Budget Outturn 2024/25</u> <i>Previously distributed: Final budget \outturn Report April 2024 - March 2025</i> Taken as read. <i>A governor asked whether there had been a £9k improvement in position than expected.</i> The School Business Manager explained the final in-year balance was -£65k, which had been lower than predicted in the revised budget. This had been a positive and the Local Authority had been pleased to see this. <i>Andrew Buttery stepped out 6:05pm</i> <i>A governor noted that while spending had been higher than expected there had been higher income too.</i> The School Business Manager confirmed this was the case, with costs being due to high staff absence and the need for supply staff to be used, which had brought in additional income from the insurance scheme. <i>Andrew Buttery returned and Laura McGouran joined the meeting at 6:07pm.</i> There were no further questions.	

4.	<p>Start Budget 2025/26 <i>Previously distributed: Start budget notes 25/26, SB summary 25/26 v1, SB CFR v1, SB CFR v2, SB CFR v3.</i> Taken as read.</p> <p><i>A governor asked whether scenario three built on scenario two.</i> The Headteacher explained that it was unlikely that scenario three would be possible, as the situation around this was evolving and but there had been confirmation that it was unlikely that this situation would be resolved until September 2026. The School Business Manager explained that it had been built on scenario one. It was most likely that what had been used for scenario one would happen, with all staff having returned to school. This had not yet been confirmed though. The Headteacher gave detail around this, and said he was optimistic about staff returning from long-term absences, but it was not guaranteed.</p> <p><i>A governor asked if there had been the assumption of a shared headteacher from September 2026.</i> The School Business Manager explained that the first two assumptions were being assumed as happening, which included the shared headship. The Headteacher explained that there had been a meeting with the Local Authority, Headteacher, Chair, and School Business Manager to discuss the previous year's budget, where it had been raised whether there would be support made available to help the school return to a positive budget. There had been some discussions about recruitment and whether consideration had been given to creating shared headship opportunities.</p> <p><i>A governor asked whether the Local Authority had the authority with other schools for this.</i> The School Business Manager was unsure but noted that it was for the Local Authority to look at vacancies and the opportunities with these.</p> <p>The Headteacher shared the process that had taken place when he had been offered a temporary shared headship role. He was hopeful that the Local Authority would be promoting this to other schools and would be supportive when of opportunities when they arose. It was important the governors were prepared for this, as opportunities could come up unexpectedly.</p> <p>The discussions governors had had about the previous shared headship opportunity had had points around staffing, with assumptions of what was in place that had not matched what was seen. There was pressure to undertake opportunities due to the budget, however the Headteacher would also want to see some assumptions agreed. The School Business Manager highlighted that having staff return from maternity leave and long-term absence was key.</p> <p>The Headteacher gave a brief update on upcoming staffing changes.</p> <p>The School Business Manager shared the balances of each scenario, with scenario three having been the cheapest even if there had been a drop in funding as the costs that came with this would have been removed. Scenario two would have saved some money due to how a continued absence could be covered rather than using supply.</p> <p>Scenario one was the most expensive but when compared to the revised budget was lower, which showed that more savings, had been made and work was ongoing to decrease the deficit.</p> <p><i>A governor asked if pupil numbers had gone up.</i> The Headteacher shared that there would be 15 new starters from September. The school would not be able to take many more pupils than this.</p> <p><i>A governor noted that the census figures for 2028 did not seem to track with the previous years, and while not a substantive difference was concerned how this change would affect the budget.</i> The School Business Manager thought it could make a slight difference.</p> <p><i>A governor noted the difference in prediction of roll from the Local Authority of 79 pupils by 2029 verses the school prediction of 131.</i> The Headteacher explained that the Local Authority based their figures on births in the local area and did not account for out of area pupils and siblings of these, which school were more aware of. It looked depressing and raised the question as to whether the school would be viable. Despite everything over the last five years, the school continued to attract pupils and the Headteacher hoped that this would not change. In-year movement was currently minimal due to the current class sizes.</p>	
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A governor asked how the school had reached its forecast pupil numbers. The Headteacher replied it was a best guess and was optimistic, based on enquiries, tracking existing pupil's siblings, and what had happened in previous years. Both predictions were data driven with the difference that the Local Authority only looked at catchment area, but the school was aware they were continuing to draw pupils from out of area. Some recent joiners from out of area had siblings who would be joining the school. This was a weighting bonus. If the school continued to promote itself and its achievements, parents would be more likely to consider it. There was also a lot of pressure on nearby schools within East Riding, so it would be good to show the school was viable outside the area.

A governor asked whether the 131 figure was still based on a four-class structure. The Headteacher noted the maximum figures were 130 and this relied on year cohorts aligning. The School Business Manager noted that the school still got in-year transfer requests, which were currently turned away due to lack of spaces in the right cohort. The Headteacher shared that there was a waiting list with around five pupils on it. It was a catch 22 situation, as the school could not grow unless it had more pupils but was limited by the four classes. There was positive promotion of the school, such as a recent VE day competition run by local MP Luke Charters. All pupils had entered, with one pupil winning. This would involve a ceremony and invaluable press coverage.

The Headteacher shared that there had been the follow up visit from the SRMA (School Resource Management Adviser) which showed that school had tried to put in what it was able to. Without the shared headship it was very challenging to make any more efficiencies. There had been no big suggestions as the school was already running on bare bones. From a personal perspective the Headteacher made it clear that in regard to a shared headship role, it would need to work for Elvington and there was a risk of schools being unable to work together which could cause damage to the schools. The Headteacher would do due diligence on any potential opportunity ensuring that it would be structure that fit with Elvington.

A governor asked about the process for undertaking a shared headship and who signed off on it. The School Business Manager talked through the process, which would include the Headteacher agreeing to the potential opportunity before it was brought to the full governing board to make the final decision. The previous opportunity had had discussions about how it would work with staff absence, and the Local Authority had not been unreasonable. The Headteacher shared that he had been contacted by a school to consider an opportunity but upon a close look it would not have been feasible.

A governor asked whether the Local Authority would push the school towards taking up an opportunity of shared headship. The School Business Manager replied that it had not pushed with the previous opportunity. The Headteacher added that as it was a decision for the governing board to make, as long as the reasoning behind turning down an opportunity was clear, he did not think there would be much push to accept it. His priority was Elvington school.

A governor asked if the target was to balance the books, would it be worth asking the Local Authority to actively seek these opportunities on behalf of the school. The School Business Manager shared that the Local Authority had been appreciative of all that had been done for the revised budget and that the school had done all they could. They had been clear that the school could not be lost and would put together a case to say that everything possible was being done, which would be taken higher up within the council. The Headteacher noted that there had to be some realism about the situation, and he had increased his teaching commitment several years earlier to keep the school viable, whenever the opportunity arose to do this, as with larger numbers leaving the school at the end of KS2 and lower numbers coming in, it had been clear what direction it was going. There were expensive staff, working at top of scale but redundancies were expensive so it was best to be done when opportunities naturally arose, and he had been very aware over the years that a smaller school would be unavoidable. The School Business Manager added that the combination of covid, energy increases, unpredicted staff absence, pay increases, and falling roll meant that even losing just two or three pupils had a massive impact.

A governor noted that while the school had done all it could do to make reductions, they were concerned that the school would not have the potential to be able to increase again. While it was important to be ambitious about pupil numbers, they wondered how realistic it was to use the higher school predictions.

The School Business Manager replied that the income in the forecasts were based on actual figures from the Local Authority and estimates for school-based income from the previous year. She had also looked at costs and predicted increases looking at where these could be reduced. Energy prices had stabilised at a lower rate than recent years but was still variable. The School Business Manager had been cautious but had had to minimise and looked at how these could be sliced better, however there was still the ongoing deficit. The Headteacher shared that following the Local Authority meeting, there was no feeling that the deficit needed to be reduced completely in a short space of time but should be reduced slower and in a positive way. It was unsure whether the Local Authority would approve this year's start budget or if more would be needed, which would then become much trickier. The biggest change would be in the reduction of supply costs, which would return to normal pay costs. The two long term absences had had significant costs, and from September it was planned to have the normal pay costs while keeping a sufficient supply budget that covered the rest of this academic year.

A governor noted that with the assumption of all staff returning from absence costs were only £17k lower. The School Business Manager explained that the assumptions for all staff to return was from September, which was part way through the financial year. Agency supply cover was needed for the rest of the academic year, at a cost of £220 a day, and this explained why the drop was less than would be expected. The Headteacher shared that everything had been done to ensure absent staff had been fully supported, being compassionate to their situations as he had a duty of care to them. The costs to cover a class were high as there was no insurance income to offset the costs, as staff were now on unpaid leave. The School Business Manager shared that 68 days of cover would cost £15k.

In response to a governor's question the Headteacher shared how the start budget submission process worked and explained what had taken place the previous year. The School Business Manager added that while they had put together several scenarios and the impacts of these, following information received that day it was clear that only one of the scenarios would be possible.

A governor noted that scenario one had more challenge for the Local Authority rather than the school the SRMA advice gave faith to what the school had done.

A governor highlighted that IT support costs were high and asked whether this could be reduced.

The Headteacher explained that the contract with the IT support services had been a long one, entered into by his predecessor. There would be an opportunity to negotiate this coming up, but changes had been made over the course of the contract when it could. This had resulted in staff laptops being replaced by PCs within the classroom, and the company had agreed that the laptops did not need to be returned, and the company would continue to give limited support of these at parts cost. The move to in class computers meant it easier for cover staff to access planning and resources, and staff could use the laptops at home for planning and report writing. When the time came to renew the contract there would be at least three tenders which would include iPads and Chromebooks. The School Business Manager explained the breakdown with the IT support contract costing £10k a year and separate broadband costs of £7k a year. The broadband contract had been agreed through the council, but they had now advised schools to go out seeking better broadband deals by themselves. The IT support company was the only one in the local area, and there could be some difficulties finding a similar level of service.

A governor asked whether this company had offered more services as they were local. The Headteacher explained that there had been some changes to the service provided during the contract period, as both school and provider had known it was not quite right. The company had been very supportive during covid lockdowns providing Chromebooks for pupils and were quite customer focused. There were not many companies who could offer the same day service that was seen, and this was a reason that locality should be considered when looking at other options.

	<p>The School Business Manager reported that there could be an option to go through the DfE (Department for Education), as had been done with the photocopier, and it would be a good way to get advice and quotes.</p> <p>In response to a governor's comment, the School Business Manager shared that the school went out to look at other quotes when a contract was up for renewal. The Headteacher added that this may not always result in lower costs, due to costs rising everywhere, but would be looked at to ensure that it was right for the school. This had been done recently with the ground's maintenance contract, which was working very well.</p> <p>A governor noted that caretaking costs doubled from this year to next and asked why. The School Business Manager explained that this was due to having the kitchen refurbishment, which meant that there was no need for a deep clean. It was the drop that was unusual rather than the increase.</p> <p>Governors discussed whether to put forward a formal request to the Local Authority for support to find shared leadership opportunities and thought that this should not be done now but would be reviewed later in the year.</p> <p>The School Business Manager shared the statement that would be submitted with the start budget, which acknowledged governors supported the decision made. The reduction in a Teaching Assistant role was not guaranteed so a further suggestion of restructuring while managing an increased number of EHCPs (Education, Health and Care Plans) would be included. There was also the option to include a suggestion of the Headteacher offering paid mentoring to other Headteachers in the local area. The Headteacher shared he had had experience of doing this, and while he was supportive in his responsibility to support other schools and their leadership, it could be an opportunity for others to benefit from his experience and expertise. Governors asked that the wording was adapted slightly to say they would be supportive were a 'suitable opportunity' arise.</p> <p>APPROVED: Governors approved the start budget - scenario one.</p> <p>ACTION: Review the need for an additional support request from the governing board to the Local Authority about shared headship opportunities.</p>	
5.	<p>Date and Time of Future Meetings</p> <p>FGB – 8th July, 6pm</p>	
The meeting ended at 7:13pm.		

Minutes to be approved at the FGB meeting to be held on 8th July 2025.

Action Plan following the meeting held on 6th May 2025

	ACTION	AGENDA ITEM	WHO	WHEN
1.	Review the need for an additional support request from the governing board to the Local Authority about shared headship opportunities.	4	FGB	September 2025