

**Kingsbury Episcopi Primary School
Full Governing Body**

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 21st May 2025

Present:

Simon Faull (SF) – Chair of Governors
Charlotte England (CE)
Fiona Guest (FG)
Elodie Carson (EC)
Mike Gulliver (MG)
Barbara Teale (BT)
Neil Burn (NB)

Apologies:

Melanie Lawson (ML) - Headteacher
Jon Loxston (JL) – Vice Chair
David Harris (DH)

Also Present:

Neil Thompson (NT) – Headteacher elect
Rebecca Lewins (RL) – Clerk to Governors

The meeting opened at 6.30 pm

1.	Welcome & introductions
	Neil Thompson was welcomed to the meeting, along with John Abbott, CEO and Steve Chattell, Chief People Officer, Richard Huish Trust.
2.	Apologies
	Apologies had been received from Melanie Lawson, Jon Loxston and David Harris. These were accepted. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.
3.	Declarations of Interest/ Register of Business Interests
	There were none.
4.	Minutes of previous meeting
	Item 8 - 2025/26 Budget Karen Keal had considered the projected income from the pre-school to be very low, and a significant contributing factor to the budget deficit. It was observed that a large proportion of the current number on roll are school starters, so could it be likely that this projection is based on the remaining number on roll? It was agreed that this does need to be confirmed as it has significant implications. It was suggested that the saving in cleaning costs was not just down to changing paper towels, but to generally changing several materials. The minutes of the meeting held on 27 th March 2025 were otherwise agreed as a true record and will be electronically signed and dated by the Chair.
5.	Matters Arising
	There were none.

6.	Actions (See appendix A)
	Item 14 - update on academisation process to go out to parents. Complete. Item 15 - Richard Huish Trust Nursery provision presentation and discussion to be on next agenda. Complete. Item 16 - Headteacher report to be on next agenda. Complete. Item 22 – information on what SSE training courses are available to be circulated. Completed via email 14 May.

7.	Matters of urgency
	There were none.

New Items

8.	Redundancy Update
	Governors were advised that the redundancy process has ended. An appeal to the compulsory redundancy decision was lodged but has now been withdrawn. The member of staff concerned has requested voluntary redundancy, which has been accepted.

9.	Planning for 4-class school
	• Classroom choices for 4 classes (environment changes) • Class sizes/choices • Staffing/logistics <i>This item was deferred to the next meeting.</i>

10.	Headteacher appointment
	ML and SF will be meeting with NT in late June as part of the handover process. NT will be in school for the 'move up' dates.

11.	Business Support staffing
	ML asked governors to consider agreeing to the recruitment of a part-time Admin Assistant to support the Business Manager role. The proposal was for three days per week. Governors agreed that the need is there, however, they felt that the appointment should be on a temporary basis because the academisation process might subsume some admin processes. Those present considered that, within the context of a teacher being made redundant and anyone on a fixed term contract not being kept on into the next academic year, there could be ill-will amongst staff if another member of staff is now taken on. It was noted, however, that a part-time admin post has a very different cost to a full-time teacher. Governors felt that it might be of more use to have a member of staff in the office at key points during the day, rather than all day for three days, but it was recognised that the Business Manager would have more knowledge about what would work best.

	Governors were aware that any recruitment that has not been budgeted for will affect the budget detrimentally; it will mean that the deficit gets paid off less quickly. After discussion, Governors agreed to the recruitment of a three day per week Admin Assistant on a short-term contract that should be advertised and recruited to through the usual process. It was noted that the school has many unpaid bills outstanding. This includes a bill from PGL from several years ago. As a result, the school is being pursued by solicitors but neither party seems able to ascertain whether the invoice was paid or not. The matter now needs to be put into the hands of the County solicitor as nothing more can be done in school. It was agreed that although the Council's MIS system has changed, this needs to be followed up. It was agreed that SF should discuss all the above with ML.
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12.	SFVS (Schools Financial Value Statement)
	Governors were told that the school should have submitted this to the Local Authority (LA) by 31st March. This hasn't been done, partly because of staffing in the school office. Governors were made aware that the school will also miss the next deadline of 31st May, which is likely to mean that the LA will inform the DfE. SF agreed to provide an update at the next meeting.

13.	Proposals for future development of the pre-school
	John Abbott CEO Richard Huish Trust and Steve Chattell, Chief People Officer, Richard Huish Trust (RHT). The RHT currently has five schools within the Trust. All have nurseries, with four offering provision outside term-time. They have a model that works, which RHT would be happy to share with KEPS, but any changes to the running of the KEPS nursery must be the school's own decision. The nursery would come under the Huish nursery brand. The RHT vision is to provide exceptional education through a shared set of living values and to provide a key link between nursery and early years provision. All RHT nurseries make a profit, and that profit goes into the school budget once education / resources are exceptional in the nursery. Nursery managers are line managed by the RHT nursery director. Admin processes are aligned in all nurseries, outside of the school office in the main. A system called Family is used for admin processes. The consistent approach across all nurseries provides consistent safeguarding and H&S procedures. Teething difficulties and resistance can include a general reluctance to change, moving from term-time to all year-round provision and taking a while for the new model to gather momentum. Nurseries often require some

	financial investment upfront and may operate at a loss at first, largely because of the staffing investment required. Question: has any parental evaluation been done [in other nurseries] to gauge how happy parents are? There is a parental survey, but no feedback has been received to suggest parents aren't happy. Question: are the existing nurseries in areas that can draw families from a wide area? Some are, but not all. Some of them are in Taunton, some in villages. Question: is the first step to recruit a nursery manager rather than use existing staff? How many nurseries changed their manager? There has been some change in management but not necessarily because of the move to becoming a RHT nursery. Question: what would be the timescale [for becoming a RHT nursery]? This would be down to the school to decide and would depend on how different or similar the two models are. Question: how would this feed into the academisation process? Ideally the two shouldn't be linked together as the academisation process may take too long in terms of how high a priority the nursery is. Question: if the nursery moves over before academisation, given the school's current financial situation, where is upfront investment going to come from? Natural wastage; the deficit sits with the LA, so they may help if a persuasive business case could be put together. Much of the school's deficit is related to the pre-school running at a loss. Question: what are the next steps? Discussion amongst governors and staff leaders around whether KEPS want to go down this route. Question: can governors see data from other nurseries, particularly the nursery that took a while to get going? Yes. After discussion, governors agreed to proceed with this model. Discussions will be had with staff and then a timeframe decided.
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Standing Items	
14.	Headteacher Report <i>Previously circulated</i> <i>In the absence of the Headteacher, it was agreed to defer questions and observations to the next meeting:</i>

	• It was noted that there are 31 children in Beech class, which breaches legislation. • With regard to attendance, to what effect are parental letters sent? How has the school responded to the parents who have responded negatively to being sent attendance letters? • The level of SEND / EHCPs / FSM in school compared to the national average is to be queried as it is high. • Has a ramp been installed to help with disabled access to the huts? • Given the incident with the swimming pool, is the fencing around the pool adequate? • There were 30 concerns/incidents in April/May – how does this compare with other schools? While NT observed that this figure compares positively with other schools, governors felt that more context would be useful.
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15.	Policies for review
	There were none at this meeting.

16.	Safeguarding
	Safeguarding was covered in Item 14 above.

17.	Health & Safety
	Health & Safety was covered in item 14 above.

20.	SEF
	<i>This was deferred to the next meeting.</i>

21.	Complaints
	There had been one Stage 1 complaint, but this was now resolved.

22.	Governor training / roles / visits
	NB will undertake new to governance training in May.

23.	Any Other business
	An update was requested around recruitment to the part-time teacher post. This was deferred to the next meeting, in the absence of ML.

Date of next meetings:

Monday 7th July 2025 - please note change.

Proposed meeting dates for 2025-26 academic year:

7 October, 2 December, 3 February 2026, 24 March, 19 May, 7 July

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.