Kirklees Directorate for Children & Young People DfE: 3004 / 3008

THE FEDERATED GOVERNING BOARD OF SAVILE TOWN CE (VC) INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL AND THORNHILL LEES CE (VC) INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Minutes of the meeting of the full Governing Board held at 5.30 pm at Thornhill Lees CE (VC) School on Tuesday, 28th April 2026.

PRESENT

Miss K Allen (Chair), Mrs K Asquith-Dolan, Ms Chloe Baker, Mr H Bismillah, Mrs A China, Mrs D Douglas (Headteacher), Ms K Iqbal, Mrs F Lee, Mr F Patel.

In Attendance

Mrs T Maguire (Minute Clerk)
Mrs Wilson (SBM at Thornhill Lees)
Mrs Helen Lever (Diocese)
Mrs Lorraine Booth (Deputy Head Teacher, Thornhill Lees)

The Chair welcomed all governors and attendees to the meeting and expressed appreciation for their continued commitment to the governance of both schools. The meeting was formally opened with a prayer, in keeping with the schools' Church of England ethos. This moment of reflection set a respectful and purposeful tone for the discussions that followed.

131. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Miss S Hussain and Mrs A Nyhan, both with consent.

There were no declarations of interest.

132. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE RAISED UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following item was notified to be raised under any other business:

- Compassionate Leave Requests (professional letter)

133. INPUT FROM HELEN LEVER (DIOCESE _ RE SIAMS INSPECTIONS
(Thornhill Lees is on the list for 2026/2027)

Governors welcomed Helen Lever from the Diocese. Helen had prepared a PowerPoint Presentation to share with governors to explain links between the school vision and SIAMS and what is required of Governors during a SIAMS inspection.

Helen explained the role of Governors which is to be aware of the focus. This includes oversight of the strategic direction of school, financial health and educational quality, to provide the best outcomes for children whilst supporting and challenging senior leaders.

The job is to uphold school as a church school, but this school is not a faith school.

Historically church schools were introduced to keep children out of the mills. Whilst the children of more affluent parents received a good education, the Church wanted to educate 'the poor of the parish', this was not instigated through any religious notion, just to provide all children with the chance of education.

The School vision must clearly reflect the Christian foundation of the school, in terms today, this translates to providing support for the more vulnerable children.

School Vision Statement

'At our school we celebrate our faith diversity and provide a safe environment where our children are happy to learn. We are kind, caring and respectful to others. We aim to inspire future generations of our school and community to become lifelong learners.'

This was taken from Proverb 2:10 *'For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul'*

Helen is a SIAMS inspector and explained that governors would need to know how the vision was formed and this involved all stakeholders, senior leaders, staff, parents and children.

Mrs Douglas confirmed the vision was established over 6 months following several staff meetings, feedback from parents, staff and governors.

During an inspection, inspectors would be looking at the Vision Statement and asking Governors why they chose this school to represent.

Helen asked Governors to think about what happens in school based on the Vision and picked out the highlighted key words / phrases and why they were chosen. Governors discussed the points and provided their input on what these specific words meant from their point of view.

Celebrate

Governors discussed how the school was inclusive for all children; all religions are celebrated in school. The school has a diverse range of children who recognise their differing backgrounds and feel important, this provides a sense of belonging.

Helen agreed and offered that 'celebrate' is a positive word adding 'this is a very happy school and joyous during the day'. Additionally, the school celebrates out in the community.

Safe Environment

Governors made the following points:

- Safe for the children, protected so they feel like they can be themselves in school
- Physically safe
- Protected during the school day

Helen added whilst the emphasis is around the safe environment for the children, in actual fact this should also include adults. Because school does celebrate adults as well, they should also be able to feel safe, e.g. be able to discuss any issues without fearing judgement.

Happy to Learn

That the children are willing and like coming into school, again that they are happy to be themselves. Mr Patel has children in the school and regularly asks his children if they are happy or whether they are experiencing any issues.

Governor witness at first-hand how the children act in school through arranged visits, and the Head Teacher confirmed that staff are not always informed about these visits and this portrays the true version of school to visitors.

The Head Teacher report provides information including data and attendance which are indicators of a child's happiness to learn and to be in school.

Inspire

How does school inspire children to become lifelong learners?

Governors agreed there were a number of elements aimed to inspire the children.

One governor had attended the school and spoke about the community base here, generationally families are enrolling their children at the school.

Looking at the curriculum and how lessons fit with the children, they are learning what interests them.

Additional points include:

- Collective worship is always inspiring in school
- Stories are told as a part of learning.
- Looking around school, inspirational quotes can be seen on walls and in classroom.
- The celebration system in school including celebration assemblies, the children want to be out in front, this is very inspiring.
- Those involved in recruitment looking for inspiring candidates who fit in with the community at school.
- When Supply Teachers come in to cover, they always say they enjoyed working here and show interest in working for the school enquiring whether there is any job availability, if possible, staff retention is very good.

Lifelong Learners

To become lifelong learners, what does this mean?

To keep in mind the education they have experienced, and to continue after they leave school.

Helen explained the statement gives children a moral background and independence to move forward, this is about building their excitement for learning, keeping them engrossed in learning so that they want to learn for the rest of their life. Children are also surprised that their teachers are still learning.

In conclusion, Helen confirmed that the Vision Statement provides the basis on which all decisions should be made.

When Ofsted came into being, inspectors were not allowed to inspect the Religious Education of Voluntary Aided schools, SIAMS inspectors were appointed to carry out this task.

The SIAMS Framework has changed over the years and requires schools to have a theologically rooted Christian vision which is sensitive to and significantly shaped by the school's context. There are 6 inspection questions for all schools and there is an additional 7th question for Voluntary Aided (VA) schools. This Federation is Voluntary Controlled (VC), therefore there would be 6 questions. High level questions will be asked around 'impact'. Inspectors do not expect any specific strategies, materials or resources to be used as long as 'impact' is evident. An inspection will include scrutinising written evidence and observing typical school practice. It allows for an evidence base to be collated collaboratively, before the inspectors use it to reach their judgements of which there are only 2:

Judgement 1 (J1) indicates excellence
Judgement 2 (J2) highlights strengths with areas needing urgent attention

Inspectors will ask following questions:

Q1: How does the school's theologically rooted Christian vision enable pupils and adults to flourish?

This will include questions like:

- What does flourishing look like here?
- How is the Christian vision expressed?
- What other strategies do leaders employ?
- How do leaders know that the theologically rooted Christian vision is enabling people to flourish?
- How does the vision of the Federation resonate?

Q2: How does curriculum reflect the theologically rooted Christian vision?

- In what way does the theologically rooted Christian vision shape the curriculum (including extra-curricular offer?
- How is spiritual development an intrinsic part of the curriculum?
- How do leaders know that the curriculum is having the intended effect for pupils?
- How does Christian vision shape learning experience for pupils who are deemed to be vulnerable and/or disadvantaged?
- How does being part of the Federation enhance the school curriculum?

Q3: How is collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?

- How do the theologically rooted Christian vision and the Anglican/methodist foundation of the school shape worship and spirituality in the school?
- How do partnerships with the DBE (Diocese Board of Education) and partnerships with parish/local church/es enhance this?
- In what way is the worship life of the school inclusive, invitational and inspirational?
- In the context of the school as a church school, what do pupils and adults understand to be the meaning of spirituality and spiritual development? How does this enhance and enrich collective worship and individual's development?

- How does the Federation contribute to and enhance the school's worship and spiritual life?

Q4: How does theologically rooted Christian vision create a culture in which pupils and adults are treated well?

- How does the theologically rooted Christian vision enable all to live well together in an inclusive, dignifying and equitable culture?
- How do school policies and practice create a culture in which people's wellbeing is enhanced?
- How is enabling good mental health for all central to school's work?
- As a result of the theologically rooted Christian vision, what effective strategies are in place that help pupils and adults, including those deemed to be vulnerable and/or disadvantaged during difficult times?
- How does the Federation contribute to and enhance the inclusion and wellbeing of pupils and adults, ensuring that all are treated well?

Q5: How does the theologically rooted Christian vision create an active culture of justice and responsibility?

- How does the theologically rooted Christian vision enable positive relationships that balance individual freedom end rights, with responsibility towards others?
- How does this culture encourage justice and courageous advocacy, enabling pupils to make ethical choices and to be agents of change?
- As an outworking of the theologically rooted Christian vision, what partnerships are important to the school? How do they impact positively and reciprocally on people's lives?
- How does the Federation make a positive impact on the culture of the school?

[18:18 – Ms China joined the meeting]

Q6: Is the Religious Education curriculum effective?
(with reference to the expectations set on in the church of England statement of entitlement for RE)

- How do school leaders ensure that the provision, profile, and priority of religious education in all key states reflects its place on the curriculum of a church school?
- How do school and Federation leaders ensure that the RE curriculum is challenging?

<u>Inspection process</u>

Schools are notified well in advance of a SIAMS Inspection, and Thornhill Lees will be inspected during the next academic year.

One week's notice is then given prior to the visit, which will be undertaken by one inspector on one day. The inspector also receives one week's notice prior to school finding out, during which time research will be undertaken including school websites to ensure information is available. Following the inspection the Diocese will speak to the inspector and attend the feedback.

[18:22: Ms Iqbal left the meeting]

On the day the inspector likes to speak to as many Governors as possible.

Q: Are Governors expected to be there throughout the day?
A: No, probably for about half an hour, the Head Teacher will organise timings and availability of Governors. Governors are also invited to attend feedback at the end of the day, this can sometimes be virtual.

Helen continued and outlined the role of Governors with specific responsibilities and steps to take, for example with monitoring, it would be useful to meet with the subject lead, also with pupils and school council. Governors could have lunch with pupils, observe break times and pupil books to ensure what is happening in school is reported correctly.

Other key areas include:

- Which staff member leads on distinctiveness?
- How do they ensure everyone recognises their responsibility?
- What involvement have you had in monitoring and self-evaluation?
- What involvement have you had in improvement planning?
- How often does distinctiveness, self-evaluation and improvement feature on the agenda at staff and Governor meetings?

Helen shared '12 questions for every Governor' to help check knowledge for SIAMS, all questions will relate to the Vision Statement, which is the first thing that will be checked.

Helen agreed to share the presentation with Governors.

In closing and on behalf of the Diocese, Helen thanked governors for giving up their time and for all they do for school and commented on what an amazing school this is.

Governors thanked Helen for the presentation, which was very useful and clearly presented.

134. REPRESENTATION

(a) To report the following matter of representation:

End of Term of Office

Name	Category	With Effect From
Kate Allen	LA	30/09/2026

Miss Allen confirmed her intention to remain on the Governing Board for the Federation.

Governors noted the following outstanding vacancies:

(b) Appointment of one Co-opted Governor
(c) Appointment of one Foundation Governor (Ex-Officio)

The Head Teacher confirmed that Mrs Asquith-Dolan's term is also coming to an end in October and will contact the Diocese.

135. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2026

The governing board reviewed the minutes of the previous full governing board meeting held on 10 February 2026. The Chair invited governors to raise any queries or amendments. No corrections were proposed, and the minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2026 be approved and signed by Chair as a correct record.

136. MATTERS ARISING

The Board reviewed the Action Log from the previous meeting held on 10 February 2026 and noted that all action points had been completed.

137. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT AND GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS

The Head Teacher Report had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting, some areas covered in the report are outlined below:

- Our schools as Church Schools
- Attendance figures
- Exclusions figures
- Quality of teaching and learning
- Wellbeing
- Attainment and progress over the year
- Staffing Updates/arrangements the academic year 2026/2027.

The Head Teacher explained that some areas covered in her report have been removed from the agenda.

Governors noted the following updates:

In School

School Inspections - School has been informed that Thornhill Lees will be having a SIAMS inspection next academic year, and Savile Town is also in the window for an Ofsted inspection.

Student Support Centre – School awaits the sign off from Kirklees. Job Descriptions and Job Specifications have been approved by HR, and these positions have gone out to advert. School were then informed that approval had been delayed. We have been told to move ahead with required works for the building, however as we are still not clear on the finance side, these works are currently being held back. Weekly meetings are still taking place and a booklet for parents has been devised. Draft SLA has been received, the date for opening has been moved from April to September.

Reception Pupil Numbers – New parents have been contacted to see if they are accepting a place and whether their child has any additional needs to be aware of. So far, there are 67 children confirmed at Thornhill Lees and this will mean one mixed Reception/ Y1 class, financially school is not in a position to run reduced class sizes. Additionally, there is one teacher and several ETAs on fixed term contracts which school will be unable to extend.

Q: What is the trend for falling birth rates?
A: This is difficult to know as numbers are currently increasing, there seems to be a 3-yr cycle.

In respect of Savile Town, Reception numbers are 25, 2 of these children will be in the Green Room. At this point last year school had more children coming in with additional needs than we were aware of.

Our School as a Church School

Student visits taking place over the coming weeks are included in report. Year 1 and 2 children at Thornhill Lees are visiting Dewsbury Minister to explore some more of the RE topics they are covering.

Restrictive interventions

Guidance which came into place from April 2026 has been incorporated into the Schools Positive Behaviour Policy and will be shared in due course. This will be implemented from September 2026.

Positive handling training has been booked for October.

Staffing and Wellbeing

Several staff have returned on phased returns over last few weeks, details are included in the report.

Mrs Sherran, SBM at Savile Town is due to commence Maternity Leave and Mrs Wilson will be working between both schools. Miss Achha will provide additional support at Savile Town.

Staff development

CPD is included in the report, and the monitoring cycle is ongoing.

Attendance to 17th April 2026

	Savile Town	Thornhill Lees
Reception	88%	88.3%
Year 1	90%	91%
Year 2	91%	92.2%
Total	89.6%	90.5%

Attendance is slightly lower than where it should be, this has been affected by children arriving back into the country after the start of term and one child who was taken out of the country, we were unable to take this child off roll.

Building, Premises and Resources

Work is ongoing in both schools and is listed in the report as follows:

	Savile Town	Thornhill Lees

Buildings	• Mag locks lifted by the front door of school • Boiler – KS1 building Summer 2026 • Fencing to be erected to prevent access from the pathway near the bungalow to the carpark.	• Fire safety work to upstairs is continuing. Fire doors still to be fitted. • Electrical rewire (Summer 2026) Upstairs and Nursery are planned to complete in 5 weeks this summer and the rest next year. • Sensory Room – wall erected by Reception library and knocked through into the Milky Way classroom.
Resources	• General Resources • Resource provision resources • Climbing provision for the Green Room • Planters to be built for gardening project (Some funding secured this year and the rest from School Fund).	• General classroom supplies • New climbing equipment for Milky Way.

Q: Regarding the issue with the falling tree at Savile Town, is that now resolved?
A: Yes, the tree has been cut back.

DFC Plans – An update has been requested on the amounts in the DFC budget and this will be shared in due course.

<u>School Development Plan</u> (SDP)

The SDP had been circulated to governors including a review of targets, a brief overview included:

- Monitoring - Book scrutiny's and Phonics walks had been conducted.
- School Trips - Students attended a Planetarium for Space week.
- Opera North continues to support in both schools
- Parent Workshops continue.
- Pupil voice groups continue.
- Staff CPD - Staff members have been allocated time to complete Dingley's Promise units.

Q: What is Dingley's Promise?
A: This is an Early Years course, bought into by Kirklees. Schools have free access if completed in time. Schools can be awarded Dingley's Promise accreditation, and this demonstrates inclusive practice. Some units are very good, particularly for new teachers.

[19.00: Mr Bismillah left the meeting]

<u>Special Educational Needs</u> (SEN)

Governors noted an increase in numbers on the SEN register and children with medical needs in both schools. Decisions on a number of EHCP's are awaited, an increase is anticipated. Review meetings with Educational Psychologists and Early Years Support Team continue.

Safeguarding

- Savile Town: CP – 0; CIN – 1; TAF – 3; LAC – 0
- Thornhill Lees: CP – 1; CIN – 2; TAF – 1; LAC – 1

Safeguarding update, numbers as at last Friday, numbers have reduced this week.

Baseline data

End of autumn term data was reported, the next data drop will be at end of Spring 2 in time for parents' evenings.

Data shows progress of children. Phonics requires updating.

Miss Allen noted the upwards trajectory. Great progress has been made and this should not be underestimated based on the starting points.

[19.04: Mrs Booth left the meeting]

138. OUTCOMES OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AND FINANCIAL AUDITS AT THORNHILL LEES

Audits have taken place at Thornhill Lees, both reports were shared prior to the meeting, and outcomes have been positive.

Financial Audit

The Head Teacher went through the key points of the audit. The following recommendations in the areas of 'Governance' and 'Financial Administration' were made.

4.1.1
Currently school buys into the Kirklees Governor Clerking Service for 3 FGB meetings per year. There is a requirement in line with the SFVS that governors receive reports of the school's budget position at least 6 times per year and following review of the minutes of the FGB and Resources Committee, it was evident that discussion around budget monitoring had taken place, however in total, this did not meet the 6 required. In order to meet obligations, school have bought into the package which increases from 3 to 6 meetings next year.

4.1.2
A review of the minutes of the FGB on 7th October highlighted a lack of clarity around the minuting of the delegated financial powers to the Head Teacher, this point had been confirmed however in the Resources Committee.

4.2.1
The School Fund is audited by the SBM at Savile Towns who is not involved in administering the fund. However, in accordance with the SFVS, funds should be

audited by an independent person, and by our SBM's auditing the opposite school fund, this is not classed as independent.

4.2.2
The annual check of inventory was not signed or dated by the member of staff who carried out the check in January. This has now been completed.

Health and safety Audit

Governors noted there were some questions and areas previously unexplored during the Health & Safety Audit, these have been added onto the annual H&S inspections. All recommendations have now been implemented.

Key points are noted below:

- H&S should be a standing item on the agenda for staff meetings to allow sufficient time for health and safety in the workplace, any discussion should be minuted.
- Fire Alarm service records – should be held in school.
- Periodic inspections of ladders and step ladders to be made and recorded.
- Risk Assessment – Safety Data Sheets (SDS) – record date the website was accessed or contact the company for latest SDS sheet.
- COSHH - Ensure there is an inventory of substances and COSHH assessments available.
- Annual checks on changing tables to be carried out by external organization.
- Pull chord checks – must be recorded when checked.
- Business use on cars – additional checks required annually.
- One bolt was not capped on playground equipment and a couple of blind chords in school did not have the fasteners on. These issues have now been rectified.

139. REVIEW PROGRESS AGAINST SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SIP) AND SELF EVALUATION FORM (SEF)

The Head Teacher confirmed the SDP had been updated; however, she has not yet had a chance to update the SEF.

140. SCHOOL WEBSITES

The Head Teacher confirmed the monitoring cycle will be reviewed to ensure all policies are up to date and will be uploaded at the end of the year.

141. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING INCLUDING

Approve 2026/2027 School Budget

Financial management and monitoring including approving budget.

The Head Teacher explained how the budget is set slightly differently this year. Figures would normally include Higher Needs, Pupil Premium, Top-up and other funding. This year however, school will receive this allocation termly rather than as annual income.

Q: Was there any explanation why the budget is set differently?
A: This is an updated system and should be more helpful in future.

The SBM added that the change will result in less budget adjustments throughout the year.

Savile Town – Draft Budget

Budget allocation was shared with Governors and the Head Teacher went through the final draft budget summary form outlining the school's financial position including all income and expenditure.

- Budget: £612,360K
- Carry forward: £37K
- Total Budget: £649,360K

All costings within each category were shared, some figures were predictions based on previous spend and percentage increases.

Categories included:

- Staffing Costs
- Admin and Clerical
- Buy Backs
- Premises
- Catering

Q: Is there a cost for broadband?
A: Yes

Q: Are the costs associated with Mrs Wilson covering both schools accounted for in the budget?
A: Yes.

3-year forecast

School also has to produce a 3-year forecast and review the end position.

This document was shared with Governors and the Head Teacher confirmed this is difficult to predict due to pupil numbers and how many children will be on the SEN register, additionally fuel costs are difficult to predict at this time.

The 3-year forecast predicts staffing costs will be over 80% and this is unsustainable. Financially the position is not good, however higher staffing ratio's are required due to age ranges and SEN children.

RESOLVED: That Governors approve the draft budget outlined above.

Thornhill Lees – Draft Budget

Budget allocation was shared with Governors and the Head Teacher went through the final draft budget summary form outlining the school's financial position including all income and expenditure.

- Budget: £1,334,765M
- Carryforward: £141,455K
- Total Budget: £1476,231M

Costings within each category were shared, some figures were predictions based on previous spend and percentage increases.

Categories included:

- Staffing Costs
- Admin and Clerical
- Buy Backs
- Premises
- Catering

The Head Teacher explained difficulties setting the budget at Thornhill Lees. We were unsure of pupil numbers in Reception until after Easter and the staffing budget initially was over 100% contributing to a deficit of £148K.

Staffing levels were reviewed and school will not be renewing fixed term contracts for one member of teaching staff and one support staff. Other fixed term contracts will also have to end. Final draft budget resulted in staffing costs of 88% which is not sustainable going forward.

3-year forecast

School also has to produce a 3-year forecast and review the end position.

This document was shared with Governors and the Head Teacher confirmed this is difficult to predict, however a shortfall is anticipated over the next couple of years.

RESOLVED: That Governors approve the draft budget outlined above.

ACTION: The Head Teacher agreed to send out P13 financial monitoring reports to confirm matching cashflow figures.

Q: Do we need to organise a Resources meeting at any point?
A: Yes, in order to comply with monitoring.

ACTION: Head Teacher to send out proposed dates for the Resources Meeting.

142. PE & SPORT PREMIUM

This item is deferred to the next meeting.

143 PREMISES UPDATES AND PROGRAMMES OF ANY SUMMER WORK(S)

This item was covered in the Head Teacher Report.

144. REVIEW / APPROVAL OF POLICIES

The following policies had been circulated prior to the meeting; Governors noted there were slight differences between the two schools.

- Teaching and Learning
- Assessment
- Intimate care

- Extra-Curricular

RESOLVED: That Governors approved the above policies for both schools.

145. GOVERNOR TRAINING AND GOVERNOR VISITS
(Sharing learning outcomes and key points)

Governor briefing – Mr Patel, Ms China and Miss Hussain.

Miss Allen and Mrs Asquith- Dolan will be attending school for collective worship and hopefully to meet with some of the students.

146. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Compassionate Leave Request (professional letter)

At the last meeting governors discussed a draft letter to circulate to staff outlining guidance around requests for compassionate leave.

The letter has since been reviewed and governors confirmed the updated version is now appropriate to send out to staff.

RESOLVED: That Governors approve the guidance letter for staff outlining the process for compassionate leave requests.

147. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS

Dates of future meetings to be confirmed.

148. AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY

RESOLVED: That no part of the agenda, minutes or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the School, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

The Chair and Headteacher thanked the Governors for attending.

The meeting closed at 19:45 pm

ACTION LOG:

Min Ref	Action	By Whom
141	Financial Management and Monitoring To send out P13 financial monitoring reports to confirm matching cashflow figures. To send out proposed dates for the Resources Meeting.	Head Teacher