Woodchester Endowed Church of England (VA) Primary School

Our church school community seeks to inspire children and adults to love, learn and flourish together so we may become everything God has created us to be.

MINUTES OF ETHOS COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 21st May 2024 AT 6.30PM

PRESENT: Mrs Alison Harris (Chair), Mrs Lynn Pennington (Co-Head teacher), Mrs L Loomes (Co-Head teacher), Mrs Sally Bull, Rev Peter Francis, Ms Becky Mullen, Mrs Jenny Warner, Mrs Rosie Birch

CH refers to Co-Head teacher

Item no		Action
01.05.24	The meeting began with a Pentecost prayer from Revd Francis	
02.05.24	**Apologies** –none	
03.05.24	**Conflicts of Interest** - none	
04.05.24	**Minutes of last meeting held on Tuesday 23rd January 2024** were accepted as a true record. Proposed Alison Harris, seconded Lynne Loomes. The minutes were signed by the Chair and will be passed on to the clerk.	**SB**
05.05.24	**Matters arising:** 04.01.24 **Church noticeboard** AH noted that there was a new display on the church noticeboard and that the CH would like something on vision to link with the Vision and Values day later in the term. 05.01.24 **Messy Church** SB said that the possibility of a clearer direction via school about the message of Messy Church session had been raised with Liz Hale but the same material just advertising the sessions was being received. She will try again. 06.01.24 **Safeguarding** - SB will check progress of all governors with Safeguarding training before 3rd June FGB. 07.01.24 **African Charity** – There was an inquiry about whether Andrew Pemberton had been approached to speak about his charity which he had recently talked about in a church service. PF will ask Andrew about this.	**SB** **PF**
06.05.24	**Experience Pentecost** The CH reported that the subject lead had provided a set of age-appropriate resources about Pentecost for staff to use at the beginning of the Focus Week. Hawthorn and Juniper have been looking at Pentecost in their RE lessons this term and other classes have had one off activities. All have explored Pentecost through artwork. There have been some changes to the original plans for the week following the pre-SIAMs visit and decision to fit in a vision and values day in July. The ISING POP Pentecost worship has been shared. The Rector will participate in the Wednesday worship to which children will bring their artwork	

	to share and celebrate. Activities have been prepared for all classes to enjoy in the church on Thursday with a focus on how gifts can be used to benefit school, village, country and world communities. These activities are led by governors and volunteers from the Open the Book Team.	
07.05.24	**Rescheduled Bible distribution for Year R –** information item This will now happen on Friday 7th June. Letters have gone out to parents who have been invited to look at the Bible which has been in the school office for inspection. 2 parents have taken up this offer. Andrew Pemberton has agreed to hand out the Bibles, all with individual nameplates created by a member of the St Mary's family.	
08.05.24	**SIAMS – feedback on pre-SIAMS visit from Mrs Loomes and Mrs Warner** Mrs Loomes explained that Kerry Geddis, a SIAMS inspector, and Debbie Helme, from the diocese, had visited the school on Thursday 9th May. It was a long and thorough visit as they walked round the school, visited classrooms, looked at working walls, talked to Mrs Loomes and Mrs Warner and Peter and to our subject leader, Miss Smith. The following areas require attention: • The entrance where there is no visible entrance of our Christian identity and vision • More invitational approach to prayer, inviting everyone to take a moment to reflect or to join in with prayer as they wish • Tweaking the vision statement so it is less "insular" • Simplify and reduce the number of values referred to in school activities and displays • Agree on Bible stories to underpin 6 values • We need to be clear about what flourishing looks like for children, staff and parents and be able to offer examples The following were praised: • Prayer spaces – but these need linking to the vision • The strong link between our vision and Biblical text • Evidence that children are living our vision Governors need to be familiar with the 7 questions SIAMS explore. Visits forms should invite comments on the vision in action. (An addition to the monitoring form had been requested by CH at the Curriculum and Standards Meeting and is in place for the next set of subject leader meetings.) GQ Isn't it odd that there is an insistence on physical evidence of our Christian identity in the entrance hall, an expectation that children can explain our Christian vision and values and the requirement that worship is not in any way exclusive? One CH felt strongly that there was any denial of inclusivity in our vision statement with the word "together" suggesting the opposite. It was felt most important that the children understand what the word "together" means in their school lives.	**Govs to read SIAMS material and or summary supplied by SB**

09.05.24	**Actions for school and governing body in response to pre-SIAMS visit** Vision - LL has pursued the comment about an "outward facing" vision statement with KG but has had no reply to her email as yet. There was some discussion of 6 possible key values linked to loving, learning and flourishing but no final agreement. A small working group was proposed to reach a considered decision and suggest Bible stories to support the agreed values. Five governors agreed to take part, meeting on 11th June at 6.15. There was discussion of what a flourishing adult and child looks like with a number of examples suggested. This included the flourishing of older church members as they meet children eg LWF choir contribution. Children and adults flourish when the children work with the Parish Council on the new playground and football field. Children flourish in contributing to the Jubilee village event, providing a "trail" of images for old and young to enjoy. FOWES allows parents to flourish as they enjoy each other's company at social events and feel proud and valued in what they do for our school. For the SIAMs SEF, the CH need a definition of what we think the flourishing pupil, adult and community look like. Three governors agreed to provide examples and ideas for LL, meeting on 14th June at 11am. The smaller governor gatherings will feed into the planning of a vision and values day on Thursday 11th July, finishing with a worship in the church.	**LL, RM, PF, SB, RB** **JW, AH, SB and LL** **CH and IS**
10.05.24	**Clarity – March 2024** AH was thanked for attending this event and for providing detailed notes. The following topics were covered: update on Ofsted inspections, including the consultation on the complaints procedure, changes to how Ofsted inspects Safeguarding , support for schools between inspections; the Workload reduction taskforce which includes representatives from unions and teachers, leaders and academics; Attendance and government initiatives; new chair support for Chairs from the diocese including focused training for vice chairs; Academisation. RB has attended the Diocese training for Foundation Governors and was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information. **Illuminate** – Monday 20th May LP had invited SB to attend as a guest. New RE curriculum and SIAMs – IS has been booked onto a course on the new framework. **Collective Worship** – encouragement to think about transition for Years R and 7. **Courageous Advocacy** – presented by Kerry Geddis. She spoke about how schools are good at fundraising but not so good at looking at why it is necessary. Children need to understand about injustice and have ideas about how it can be tackled. Children can be overwhelmed by a problem but should encouraged to explore small steps as individuals and communities which can make a difference. Schools need to "ignite the passion" to make a difference – taking risks, standing up for what they believe in, showing resilience, daring. They should be encouraged to see they can be voices for the voiceless. Rather than just having cake sales for the homeless they should be given the chance to explore why it happens, what it feels like. They should be encouraged to be knowledgeable, to argue a case, to recommend. We should not be spoon-feeding actions. The curriculum is a springboard for exploring and acting eg topics in geography, novels, science. We	

	are aiming to encourage a focus on justice. Next half-term teachers will be asked to look at the curriculum to see what could be used as a springboard. SB had found the session very useful, developing her understanding of the term and leaving her hoping that some of Thursday's activities in church may be a springboard for some courageous advocacy research and response.	
11.05.24	**Policies** The updated list of policies to accompany the Committee's Terms of Reference is nearly complete and will be ready for our September meeting. Worship Policy – Rev Francis suggested that he and Mr Harris work on a wider range than the values referred to in the policy, including the Christian calendar. GQ Are pupils withdrawn from Worship or RE? What happens to them if they are? The CH said there had been no recent requests though a parent had asked to withdraw a child from both. She has explained that Worship and RE provide all with an opportunity to think and share ideas and are not about indoctrination. The child remained in both. An older child has stayed out of Worship and read in the past. LL said we have work to do with parents on the difference between a church and faith school. SB said this had been addressed by Governor displays at Parents' evenings but that parents had shown little interest. The policy was ratified, proposed by Peter Francis and seconded by Rosie Birch.	**CH**
12.05.24	**AOB** A volunteer was requested to undertake a SIAMS pupil voice visit. The questions have been prepared. SB offered to do this. There had been further objections to Open the Book worships from a group of parents who had been looking at their Evangelical Alliance rating. LL asked that Governors produce a carefully worded piece about the involvement of our Open the Book team for the website. She can then direct parents to look at this and quote from it in any communication with them. This should cover who they are, why they come in the nature of the session, the children's participation. SB volunteered to write something to show to other governors. It was suggested that a video of the group in action was included and some quotations from the children. Governors considered whether the parents should be invited in to discuss the ethos of a Church of England school. LL said she would continue to convey messages about the ethos of the school in the newsletter	**SB/LL**
	The Meeting finished at 20.25	
12.01.24	**Date and time of next meeting: TBC**	

Signed as a true record …….

Dated ……..……