



**Bethersden Primary School**  
**Minutes (part 1) of the Full Governing Body (FGB) Meeting**  
**held at the School on Wednesday, 14 March 2018 at 0800 hrs**

**Present:** Mrs S Buckman (Chair); Mr S Gawthorpe (Headteacher); Mrs S Carysforth; Reverend C Denyer; Mrs W Grace; Mrs G Foley; Mr A Jones; Ms A Morgan; Mrs J Read; Ms S Beale (Associate)

**Clerk:** Lynne Clemitson (KCC Clerking Service)

*For Action  
by:*

**Welcome**

The Chair opened the meeting at 0804 hrs and welcomed governors.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Governors received and accepted apologies from Mr R Clark (work). The meeting was quorate.

2. **Declaration of Business & Pecuniary Interests**

Governors confirmed they had no business interests to declare against any item on the agenda for this meeting.

3. **Succession Planning**

Governors agreed there should be a variation in the length of term of appointments to facilitate continuity and succession planning.

**Appointment of Chair of Governors** [managed by clerk]

Mrs S Buckman confirmed that she was prepared to put herself forward for the position. There were no other nominees and Mrs Buckman was elected unanimously to the post of Chair of Governors for a 3 year term.

**Appointment of Vice Chair of Governors** [managed by Chair of Governors]

Mrs J Read's nomination was unanimously endorsed and she was appointed Vice Chair for a period of 2 years.

**Associate Membership**

Mr S Harris (former governor) had indicated a willingness to support the Governing Body in an associated role. Governors unanimously endorsed his appointment as Associate Member, without voting rights, for a four year term commencing 14 March 2018. It was agreed that Mr Harris would not be required to attend meetings of the governing body.

**Vacancies Update**

Governors discussed potential candidates from within education and elsewhere, and the Headteacher and Vice Chair agreed to follow up and report back at the next meeting.

HT/VC for  
action

4. **Approve Minutes**

Minutes (part 1 and part 2) from 31 January and confidential minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of 26 February were reviewed and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Minutes were handed to the Headteacher for secure filing in school.

5. **Matters Arising**

**Governing Body (GB) Skills Matrix**

The clerk undertook to resend the questionnaire to those governors who had not yet completed. Governors to return to the clerk by end March 2018.

Clerk

**Enhanced DBS for Associate Members**

Details of Mr Harris' enhanced DBS were contained within the school's Single Central Register. Mr Patience's application had been processed, details to be confirmed.

Confirm AP's  
entry on SCR

6. **School Plan (SIP) and Summary Self Evaluation (SEF)**

Documents had been made available on the secure governors' area of the school website. The Chair invited the Headteacher to share highlights.

**Leadership and Management**

Most development points had been completed, whilst Project 96 and communications with parents (SIP 2.2) were ongoing. Preparation of case studies for children with multiple vulnerabilities was progressing and had been completed for years 2 and 6. Training for staff was scheduled for 27 April. Training in subject leadership would take place before end of year. Teachers were already engaged in subject leaders' groups in Science, English and Maths.



### **Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

The quality of teaching across the school remained good, with ongoing 'drop in' observations and feedback for staff. Curriculum review was ongoing, and Bethersden would receive bespoke training and support through Ashford Teaching Alliance. The school had secured 2 places on the National Association of Headteachers' training for middle leaders at no cost to Bethersden. Maths calculation policy was embedding, as were standards of writing across the curriculum – the latter commented on positively by Ofsted. The school continued to work to develop a bank of resources specific to year groups.

A senior peer review was scheduled for Term 5, though could be delayed until Term 6 due to staff absence.

### **Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare**

Bethersden was now engaged with educational psychology services for whole school training and would be a pilot school for the Solihull approach – focused on managing children's behavior. It was a powerful tool and was now part of the core offer for new parents to Bethersden. Governors noted that it was a similar approach to restorative justice.

### **Governors questioned:**

- **Was it used supportively by all adults in school currently?**

Not yet – two twilight training sessions, covering parts 1 and 2, were booked for 18 April and 9 May (running 3.30-5.00pm). Governors were encouraged to attend. The Headteacher explained that the training was bespoke for Bethersden school and the needs of its pupils. He cited his experience with this approach in another school and the qualitative data (behaviour incidents fell by 70%) which was why he had committed to it. All things equal, Bethersden would become a leading practitioner school in the area.

- **What is Leuven?**

This was in relation to children's wellbeing and Bethersden wanted to get the special needs team involved in training. [In Ashford capacity was down by 40%, and therefore appointments scheduled for Terms 4/5 had necessarily been shifted to Term 6.]

- **Does the Solihull approach offer means of managing within the classroom?**

Leuven gives a rating in terms of children's engagement and how they are feeling. As professionals, teachers make that judgement anyway. Solihull was more about how you dealt with an incident when it occurred. Bethersden wanted to focus on that first, before moving on to Leuven.

- **In relation to school closure due to the bad weather, can you advise of the impact on school attendance data?**

When a school necessarily closes, a different code applies and does not have a detrimental impact on school data. As Bethersden closed for 3 days, attendance would be based on 384 sessions rather than the usual 390. The school register had been open on the Friday afternoon – before the school's early closure. Those pupils who were in school were marked as present in the afternoon too.

In response to further governor questioning, the Headteacher relayed the guidance which had been given to the school by the local authority which gave Headteacher's discretion to determine an explained 'y' absence or otherwise. Out of 43 pupils who did not attend, 37 were given explained 'y' absence codes.

A governor expressed concern about making the determination of explained absence or otherwise, and the Headteacher assured them that families had the opportunity to take this up directly. It was an operational decision, and governors noted that this would impact on attendance data.

A governor requested that 'national' benchmark data was provided with future attendance statistics.

The Headteacher briefed governors on the status of the School Council and their new facilitator. He hoped that the link governor would attend some School Council meetings, and – when children had more experience – they could also attend part of governors' meetings. The Link Governor confirmed he would be delighted to do so, and undertook to speak to the facilitator to arrange this.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

Bethersden was receiving support from Highworth's Caroline Berry focused on getting Year 6 and vulnerable pupils Secondary Ready and securing good levels in their SATs. The Chair had met Ms Berry and commented

GB Training  
Opportunity

HT for action

School Council  
link governor for  
action



on her passion to engage pupils and secure best outcomes for them. This was reinforced by the Staff Governor who provided an insight into Ms Berry's input and impact at Bethersden.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Early years continued to be focused. The School Improvement Adviser had commented positively on the indoor learning area. A parent had kindly volunteered to undertake – free of charge – some necessary works to improve the outdoor environment but this had been delayed due to the inclement weather. Early Years had been moderated by TRA Heads, and further external moderation by KCC was scheduled for 10 May. The Early Years link governor was invited to that session.

Early Years Link Governor for KCC moderation 10 May

Work on preparing case studies for vulnerable pupils was progressing. The Headteacher would be attending an Early Years Conference on SEN on 23 April. He hoped to be accompanied by families, providing an opportunity for insight to what can be achieved outside of school. The Head was also hoping to encourage parents from the pre-school to participate to support a seamless transition to Reception.

### **Governance**

Governors were disappointed that the TRA training had been cancelled and they had lost an opportunity to network with TRA Governors. The skills matrix had been completed but was being updated to identify any gaps.

### **Progress and Attainment**

Term 3 Data summary had been shared with Governors (copy in the secure governance area on the school website).

Governors questioned:

- **What have been the most effective and least effective interventions to date?**

Read Write Excellence continued to be extremely successful. The staff governor advised that latest data from the 5-weekly assessment indicated 85% progress across the board. Phonics screening was closely monitored and in a recent assessment of Year 1, the cohort was 2 children away from a 90% pass (56% last year). Governors were assured that the pass rate would be on target at 80%.

Year 2 re-takes had recently been re-assessed. Out of 5 pupils, one (with significant special needs, and referred to LIFT) was not expected to pass. Progress for two of the five had slowed, and an intervention had been put in place to support them. The remaining 2 pupils would pass without difficulty.

The Headteacher took the opportunity to inform governors that the RWI publishers had been so impressed with how the school had progressed, they spoke about preparing a case study of Bethersden to publish on their website and other documentation. Though the school had heard nothing more, governors commended the staff governor for her work in this area.

- **Can you give specific examples of less effective interventions?**

The school had identified a gap in terms of resilience in writing in Year 2. As a result, the school had withdrawn the RWI workbook which required pupils only to fill in the blanks within the workbooks. Now everything was written, including in Early Years, to develop resilience: The Year 1 expectation was being pushed in readiness for the move to Year 2.

The Headteacher referred to his bid for ATA support with writing at KS2. The ATA had met on 13 March with the Arrow group from Nottingham and hoped to win support for Bethersden to become a pilot school focused on accelerating reading which impacted on writing.

The School Improvement Adviser had been into school on 12 March and had agreed that greater focus was needed on boys' writing and giving them the opportunity to be successful. Governors noted the ratio of girls to boys. The staff governor advised that she was going into pre-school to support in terms of motor skills.

- **Do children get the opportunity for role play?**

The school run Lego interventions where children had defined roles. They received a set of instructions and took on roles as builder, architect and planner. Language was a big issue for boys and the school had bought into a package 'Better Communications' looking at early language development. It was about providing lots of opportunities for children to articulate their feelings, and greater exposure to word and sentence forming. Another package used by the school was 'sounds progress' – looking at early language development and how to pitch phonics. The school was taking many different approaches to support the children.



- **Can you describe an intervention with the least impact?**  
An experienced HLTA had been delivering 1:1 or small group pastoral support to children in the afternoons to build self-esteem and resilience. Children had enjoyed group time but the impact had not been evident when they returned to the classrooms. However, those pupils had lost the opportunity to develop valuable skills, namely working with their peers and groups within class. The HLTA was therefore redeployed to work in Year 6 delivering support in the classroom – working with children at their time of need.
- **Were those children more comfortable out of class?**  
Pupils were not uncomfortable in class. Keeping children in the classroom was better, especially for role modeling and challenge.
- **If there was one piece of data in the latest assessment round you were least happy with, what would it be?**  
The Headteacher expressed his concern for pupil premium and diminishing the difference. He thought more could be done next year to use funding more effectively to benefit outcomes of those pupils. He outlined plans to do this in FY 2018/19. Currently 17 pupils received PP funding.
- **What about progress of more able children?**  
In terms of exceeding age related expected, across the school the data indicated numbers were growing: 39% reading; 28% writing; 31.5% maths – combined 19.8%. The Headteacher relayed some of the actions in place to stretch and challenge more able pupils, including the 'more able' learning champion, stretch and challenge mornings. The school hoped that Homewood would support some science afternoons. Bethersden was on the waiting list for 'Fizz Pop' which had been well received last time. Money would be set aside in the budget next year to progress 'more able' challenges.
- **Is a subsidy available for those who may not be able to afford it?**  
For children in receipt of pupil premium funding, support was available, and other families had been encouraged to speak to the school if they faced difficulties. The Headteacher advised that he had taken over the computing club to free up the Maths leader/Year 6 teacher to focus on SATS. In computing the school was reviewing the software it was using and, although not specifically focused on more able, could provide an opportunity to encourage them in this field.
- **How does the progress measure work?**  
Referring to Target Tracker, the Headteacher explained the 6 steps (1 per term) and provided an interpretation of the different levels of working within the framework.
- **Can you explain the reason for the lower data in Year 4?**  
The Headteacher explained that the cohort was playing catch-up and the reason for this. The group was being monitored carefully. In addition, 2 of the original group had now left, and four new children had joined. Although the school requested data for new pupils from their previous schools, it was not always forthcoming. When Target Tracker (software package) had no prior data on a child, it measured progress as zero – this brought down the average for the year group.
- **Was the school confident that teaching now in place would support the children and get them to where they needed to be?**  
The situation was improving, and staff training should impact positively – though there was still work to do with some children. The Headteacher provided assurances that staff were doing everything they could to progress every child.

The Headteacher informed governors that Kent's Literacy lead (Penny Bill) would be in school later that day with a focus on how the school plan for English. She had already completed a learning walk and looked at books and observed good practice already in school. However, she was going to offer a different way of planning using high quality inspirational texts from the outset. She would also provide a booklist for each year group, with suggested activities and more effective ways to use, created by English leaders. To improve literacy resources, money raised at the book fair – plus a generous donation from a parent - would be used to purchase more books, one of the priorities in this year's school improvement plan.

#### **School Improvement Adviser's Report**

Ruth Swailes (SIA) had been in school on 12 March. The Chair had met with her and provided a verbal summary account for governors' information. The SIA's formal written report was awaited and would be shared when available.



### **Early Help letter of 6 March**

The Headteacher shared a letter from Early Help regarding attendance and advised governors that he had raised this with the SIA and had returned it to KCC seeking explanation.

### **Good Ofsted – KCC Congratulations**

The Chair shared her thinking that the latest Ofsted reflected the school's vision and drive for excellence. The new corporate director at KCC (Matt Dunkley) had written a congratulatory letter to school staff, governors and pupils on securing a 'good' judgement. The Headteacher highlighted that governance had come out as being a real strength.

### **Ofsted Action Points**

The Headteacher gave a verbal summary of progress to date including quality of teaching ('good' judgement across the school), attendance now at 94.89% (compared to 92% this time last year). Governors were advised that the Head had written personal letters to 7 families who had worked hard to improve attendance and 17 letters to families who had shown a marked improvement but had not yet managed to reach 95%. Three families were at 94.97%. Four letters had issued in connection with declining attendance and 2 families had received support.

The Chair noted that the SIA had suggested unpicking the data further, to identify the impact of attendance on vulnerable groups. The Deputy Headteacher (Associate Member) highlighted the impact of chicken pox. However, all in all, it was an improving picture.

### **GB Monitoring Reports linked to School Plan**

Governor reports had been shared in advance on the secure area of the school website:

#### **a) Online Safety and ICT**

Ms Morgan's visit report of 31 January 2018 referred. Ms Morgan relayed the findings of that visit and how she had spent time with Mrs Green testing online safety. She believed the school had a robust system in place for managing this and set out how the levels of access differed for staff and pupils. As an experiment, she had attempted to connect with 'e-bay' and had advised the Headteacher.

In response to further governor questioning, the Headteacher confirmed that inappropriate access requests were notified so that he could respond promptly. He explained that staff and pupils worked on the same allocated laptop throughout the year for audit and tracking purposes.

The Headteacher assured governors that the policy was explicit on staff not using their own laptops with the children. The practice in school was for teachers to check their laptops before opening in class.

#### **b) Early Years**

Rev'd Denyer's monitoring report from his visit on 31 January refers. Governors commented positively on this and had no questions.

#### **c) Monitoring with the School Improvement Adviser**

The Chair's input with the SIA during her monitoring visit on 12 March refers. Governors commented that it was extremely helpful to have the Chair's perspective on this.

### **7. Chair's Report**

Governors discussed the content and impact of their Extraordinary Full Governing Body meeting on 26 February and unanimously agreed a way forward (recorded in Minutes, part 2).

### **8. Safeguarding**

The Headteacher updated governors: he confirmed that the Chair was fully briefed on a recent referral, and the safeguarding governor would be updated when he visited school to go through safeguarding practices and procedures. Mrs Foley would complete bespoke safeguarding training on 19 March.

### **Health & Safety Update**

The Health and Safety Governor agreed to complete a H&S walk and report back at the next meeting.

The Headteacher updated governors in relation to water management. KCC's preferred company was due to attend site on 23 January but this visit had been cancelled due to Ofsted, and was in the process of being rescheduled. In response to the Health & Safety Governor's questioning, the Headteacher provided details of KCC's preferred company.

Rev'd CD for visit.  
GF training

Mr Jones for  
H&S Walk &  
Report



<p>9. <b>Finance</b></p> <p><b>Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)</b> The Chair (also link governor for Standards (Finance)) advised that she had worked alongside the Headteacher and Finance Officer to prepare the SFVS for submission to KCC. In response to governor questioning, the Chair confirmed that it reflected Compliance recommendations and would be submitted to KCC within their timescale of end March. On that basis, governors unanimously endorsed the SFVS (signed copy to be filed with minutes).</p>	HT for signed copy with minutes
<p><b>KCC Feedback on Nine Monthly (December) Monitoring</b> Governors noted there were no comments.</p>	file copy with minutes
<p><b>Benchmarking</b> Whilst benchmarking had been scrutinized by the Headteacher, and elements referred to at the full governors' meetings in December and January (referenced in minutes, part 2), it was agreed that – especially in light of the significant variance in the budget – full benchmarking data should be presented to governors at the next meeting.</p>	Agenda Item
<p><b>Human Resources: Staffing Structure and TCP (Total Contributory Pay)</b> Latest KCC guidance was awaited. Governors discussed the school's historical approach to TCP and why they had continued to follow KCC guidelines in relation to TCP. In order for timely payments to be made to staff after guidance was published, governors unanimously agreed that for FY 2018/19 the school should adhere to KCC's published guidance and ceilings for TCP.</p> <p>Staffing Structure would be reviewed as part of the 3 Year Plan.</p>	Agenda Item
<p><b>3 Year Budget Plan</b> Governors were pleased to learn that the Headteacher would meet with Schools Financial Service on 4 May to review the budget plan. Pupil Premium and Sports funding would be given their own budget codes next year to facilitate more robust monitoring, linked to pupil outcomes.</p> <p>FY 2017/18 budget would be closed down on 9 April. At this time, there was a significant – and positive – variation in the budget forecast since the 6 and 9 monthly monitoring positions: the carry forward in September showed a significant deficit of approximately £49,000 and had moved from approximately +£8,000 in December to +£28,479 at the end of February 2018. Governors acknowledged this remarkable turn-around in the school's finances, congratulating the Headteacher and requesting the minutes record their thanks to the Finance Officer for all her work on the budget.</p> <p>The Headteacher advised that the Finance Officer was scheduled to attend budget training for schools.</p>	Agenda Item
<p><b>Premises</b> KCC had completed a comprehensive inspection of the premises in February which had taken 4.5 hours. The Headteacher relayed the issues identified, which included the mobile classroom (subsidence; damp; significant water ingress; pointing; and drainage). There was much more work than had been anticipated and it would take longer than usual to prepare the report (15 days rather than 5-10). Governors acknowledged the extremely difficult conditions in which staff were working and hoped that KCC would agree to return the building to a good and manageable state of repair, enabling the school to budget sensibly thereafter for routine maintenance.</p>	
<p>10. <b>Tenterden Rural Alliance (TRA)</b> The GB was disappointed that training for governors planned for February had been cancelled at short notice. The Headteacher explained that some training for school staff had also been cancelled, largely due to poor attendance. Governors discussed the reasons why TRA events were failing to attract participants, and the value of some of the collaborative work (e.g. moderation), as well as networking opportunities for GBs.</p>	
<p>11. <b>Policies</b> Governors discussed policies which were due for review at this meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Pay and Rewards</b> – deferred, at the Headteacher's request. His scheduled training on this had been cancelled and he wanted to completed the rescheduled course on 27 April in order to brief and support governors in making informed decisions.</li><li>• <b>Behaviour</b> – defer to allow for any potential impact from staff training.</li><li>• <b>Home Learning</b> – defer to allow for further input from parents/carers. The Headteacher advised of the response he had received to a recent parental questionnaire – there had been no consensus as a result of that. The next step was to invite in a selection of parents to discuss plans to move this forward.</li></ul>	



Governors were briefed on a possible Home Learning Menu. The Chair commended to governors the 'Snow Learning' which the school had prepared in response to its closure.

- **Flexible Working** – a KCC Schools Personnel Service (SPS) model policy which had been adapted to meet Bethersden's needs. Governors unanimously agreed this, next review 2 years.

**Governor Services Monthly Bulletin**

The Monthly Bulletin for February 2018 had been shared with governors (March edition not available at the time of the meeting). The Chair highlighted DfE's actions to promote a reduction in teacher workloads and noted that the Headteacher had been most proactive in this regard, as she had observed during her recent monitoring. As an example, the Headteacher described how feedback was now being managed in order to reduce teacher workload.

Governors went on to discuss staff welfare more generally and were advised of a package the school had purchased for this purpose. Governors asked how Fit 2 Teach would help if self-questionnaires were anonymous. The Headteacher explained that the system was designed to provide high quality generic data for senior leadership; in terms of individual concerns, he expected the Senior Leadership Team would anyway be aware of any issues given they knew their team so well. The Staff Governor described the questionnaire as a good self-monitoring tool.

12. **Training and Development**

The Headteacher and Chair of Governors had attended training on General Data Protection Regulation on 7 March. TRA training, on which all governors had booked, had been cancelled at short notice.

12. **Any Other Urgent Business**

Governors discussed the pressures on business to release staff for voluntary (e.g. governance) duties. The Chair undertook to write a letter of thanks to employers for those who had not previously received one.

SB to prepare letter for AJ

13. **Confidentiality**

Governors agreed that some discussion should be treated as confidential and recorded in minutes part 2.

14. **Meeting Dates for remainder of 2017-18** (commencing 0800 hrs), followed by GB monitoring.

Wed 23 May  
Wed 11 July

Signed: ..... Date: .....  
Chair of Governors  
Bethersden Primary School