



Bethersden Primary School
Minutes (part 1) of the Full Governing Body (FGB) Meeting
held at the School on Wednesday, 18 October 2017 at 0800 hrs

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

Clerk: Lynne Clemitson (KCC Clerking Service)

For Action by:

Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting at 0810 hrs and welcomed governors. She advised of Rev'd Denyer's late arrival (0935 hrs).

1. **Apologies for absence**
There were no apologies: 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. **Statutory Paperwork**

Business and Pecuniary Interest Declarations

Outstanding Declarations were returned to the clerk to update the Register.

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct, based on the NGA template, had been tailored for Bethersden. Governors signed and returned to the clerk for filing.

4. **Minutes of 20 September 2017**
The minutes, having been circulated prior to the meeting, were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5. **Matters Arising**

Election of Vice Chair of Governors

The Chair invited nominees. Mr S Harris indicated his preparedness to stand for a further 1-year term (nominated by Mrs Carysforth, seconded by Mrs Grace). There were no other nominations and governors unanimously voted in favour of Mr Harris's immediate re-appointment.

Governor Biographies/Photographs for School Website

Governors agreed to send outstanding biographies to the Headteacher by end of term. The photographer would be in school on 19 and 20 October and governors were encouraged to have their portraits taken for the school website (no appointment necessary).

Governing Body (GB) Skills Matrix

The matrix was tabled. Governors decided to review at the next meeting, when all completed questionnaires had been uploaded.

6. **Headteacher's Report linked to School Plan and GB Objectives**
The Headteacher's report was tabled, giving him an opportunity to talk through the new condensed headline format, and the school's vision statement. This was well received by governors.

School Vision

'At Bethersden Primary School we are an inclusive learning community Dedicated to Excellence. A community where all members are valued equally and treated fairly according to their needs and cultural, religious, social background, and are given the widest possible opportunities to develop their own personal excellence.'

Key issues at last Ofsted

The Headteacher set out the key issues to be addressed from the last Ofsted Inspection.

School Context

There were 125 children on roll (19 pupil premium and 14 with special needs). The school was setting up tracking for pupils with multiple vulnerabilities. There had been no complaints or exclusions, and no racial or bullying incidents.

Clerk to follow up with Rev'd Denyer

Governors to action

Agenda Item



Things to Celebrate

- The successful Inset Day on 4 September which launched the school's vision, and resulted in transformation of the assessment processes.
- Reception children had settled quickly, and plans to integrate them in the main playground had been brought forward.
- A full and dedicated complement of staff, working together well in class teams.
- Thanks to Mrs Finn, the library was now open to pupils at break and lunch times, and had been actively promoted; the school expected to enter more pupils to the Summer Reading Challenge next year, as they developed their passion for reading.
- Attendance had improved, and stood at 94.28% (96.13% - if those travelling were excluded).

The Headteacher referred to Project 97 (new County/National target for attendance) and the robust systems in place for monitoring. He had met with the Schools' Liaison Officer who had been delighted with progress. Bethersden was now supporting another Tenterden Rural Alliance (TRA) school by sharing best practice (2 hours of out-reach per week).

Governors questioned:

What had made the difference so quickly?

Arrival times had been tweaked to reduce the 'late' parameters. Letters had also been issued from day one. Whilst no penalty notices had yet issued, warnings had been sent, and requests for medical evidence sought for future absence(s). Mrs Thompson spent the first hour of every school day in the office to receive calls about pupil absence: Mrs Bowden made outward calls of enquiry, and every absence was challenged. Where children had medical appointments, they were expected to be in school for register, and were then released as necessary.

The Headteacher was considering involvement in 'Let's Get Better', a scheme running alongside Project 97. The focus was on supporting parents to understand when it was important to send children to school, and when not. He cited some examples, e.g. a child who had vomited after over-eating at a party did not need to stay away; however, if sickness was due to a virus or bug, the child should remain at home.

Would it be possible to put 'permission for the school to administer medication' forms online, which parents could download and sign in advance?

In future, all forms would be available to download from the school website. If families had issues with accessibility, they could ring the office, and would be sent a copy. Permission for the school to administer medication had to be signed by the parent or authorised carer in line with the medical policy.

Has the 48-hour rule changed?

Until such time as there was clarification from KCC, the rule had not changed. However, commonsense should prevail, i.e. over-indulgence versus virus.

Governors thanked the Headteacher for clarification on these points, and suggested it might be helpful to give some examples on the website of when it was appropriate, and when not, to send children to school.

Effectiveness of Leadership and Management

The Headteacher outlined changes to the senior leadership team (SLT) structure and responsibilities. Initially he would be covering special needs to enable Mrs S Green (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) to support Miss S Beale with teaching and learning (Mrs R Padilla would support SENCo with paperwork).

The Senior Improvement Adviser had commented positively on the capacity of the leadership team, and the vision and direction that leadership was taking the school; she had upgraded the school's SEF (self-evaluation) judgement to reflect this. It was now solidly good.

Subject leadership pairs had been established, supported by teaching assistants (TAs). The Headteacher set out the merits of this system, e.g. for succession planning, as well as sharing the workload and ideas. As Maths was a priority for the school this year, most senior staff (Miss Beale and Mr Clark) had been assigned to drive it forward. Miss Hughes would be working alongside Mrs Grace on English. Mrs Green's focus would be vulnerable groups, and supporting teaching and learning.

The Headteacher informed governors about 'spirals of enquiry', a significant project to drive forward teaching and learning at Bethersden. Conversations around maths had begun, and changes to support opportunities for writing had already been made. Subject leader reports in Maths, English, and Spirals of Enquiry, would be presented to governors at their January meeting.



Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Headteacher briefed governors on the outcomes and actions resulting from the recent peer review (recorded in minutes, part 2).

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

The Headteacher alluded to Bethersden's role in processing a safeguarding issue which occurred outside of school.

Governors were informed about the behavior log, and how it would be managed. It would enable the school to establish if there were issues specific to a child or class, help to identify patterns, and whether or not there was a need for support.

Would all incident reporting go through the Headteacher's office?

Yes, it would be part of pupil progress meetings, the first scheduled for the week of 30 October. Now that class teams had been established, feedback was given to the team rather than an individual. In that way every member was aware of difficulties. This way of working provided continuity and, to give teachers and the class team security to progress, staff mobility within classrooms was being kept to an absolute minimum.

With reference to prior staff absence levels, is this likely to impact?

The Headteacher advised of robust systems now in place to manage and monitor absence, including 'return to work' interviews, contact points, and reintegration programmes.

Outcomes of Pupils

A staff meeting was scheduled during PPA time on 18 October to consider assessment and moderation of data. The current picture for Years 2 to 6 was: 64% age related expected (ARE) for reading; 60% ARE for writing and 69% ARE for maths. Year 1 data (different curriculum) would be available at the December meeting.

Next term progress measures would be available, base-lined from last year's data. Bethersden would be looking for an average of 1 step of progress for every child; 1.1 step for vulnerable groups. The Headteacher spoke of the different language and judgements within the two systems, and therefore governors should expect to see cautious judgements at the outset.

Does anyone in school have Target Tracker experience?

The Headteacher had used it for 4 years (which was why Bethersden had been able to acquire the programme swiftly, and avoid significant training costs). There was wide experience within the TRA, and the school was planning to set up joint moderation of levels in Term 3 (following successful completion of the 4-week plan).

Do you feel you have a handle on it?

The Headteacher said he was more comfortable with Target Tracker, and spoke about how it could be used to extrapolate data specific to Bethersden's cohort, citing multiple vulnerabilities as an example. Another governor (also member of staff) pointed out that they had accessed it (Target Tracker) in training school. With reference to Early Years, the Headteacher advised that the most relevant and effective option was 'Early Excellence', and so when children moved to Year 1, manual (rather than automated) judgements were necessary.

The Headteacher emphasised that the school could receive a 2-day Ofsted due to data from the last 2 years, and assured governors of the systems and procedures which had been put in place to improve the outcomes of pupils. The Chair reiterated the importance of GB understanding on where the school was, and how it would move forward – she urged governors to seek clarification if they had any concerns or unanswered questions. She hoped that when Ofsted came in, a large group of governors would be available to come into school and speak confidently with the Inspection team about the school's data. She relayed her experience with the peer review.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Governors were advised that the team was working well together, and had established a good learning environment which had led to the successful induction of 16 Reception children. Rapid and sustained progress was expected from this single year-group class. The outdoor learning area would be a focus for fund-raising this year, and it was hoped that Friends of Bethersden School (FoBS) would support. The school would provide a list of what was required.

Community Links

Mr Clark had organized 1000 hours of volunteering for the children; so far, they had weeded the churchyard, and they would sing at the afternoon tea in church. Mrs Grace had hosted 'race at my place' to raise funds for life, and a coffee morning had been held for McMillan. Donations from the harvest festival had been gratefully received by Ashford Family Foodbank, and the festival service had been well attended by parents and a number of members of the church congregation (encouraged by Rev'd Denyer and the Chair of Governors). Moving



forward, Bethersden would have a page in the monthly parish magazine; the Headteacher would prepare the first article to explain the school’s mission statement; thereafter each class would take it in turns to prepare an article. The magazine would be used to promote school events, and parishioners would be encouraged to attend.

Collaboration

The Headteacher reiterated the successful collaboration within the TRA, and referred to Ashford Teaching Alliance and Spirals of Enquiry (recorded elsewhere in minutes). He reminded governors of the annual safeguarding training scheduled for 6 November, and raised awareness of the new data protection guidance and how it would impact on schools.

In conclusion, he undertook to circulate the teaching and learning plan, and asked governors to let him know if there was anything they wanted to add.

HT to circulate plan

Monitoring Schedule linked to School Plan

The Chair advised that the schedule would be drawn up when the Improvement Plan was finalised at the end of half term.

The monitoring schedule for the 18th (today) was linked to the 4-week (interim) plan, and would focus on children’s books. The Chair encouraged governors to talk to as many pupils as possible, and ask what they were learning. The Headteacher referred to guidance on approaching children and pupil voice, and how this could support teaching and learning. As guidance was not available for this session, governors agreed to draw up 4 questions to use with the children, to provide consistency.

7. **Chair’s Report**

The Chair provided a verbal report, sharing her experience of the peer review, and of time spent in school supporting the Headteacher, and meeting with the Senior Improvement Adviser.

8. **Safeguarding**

The Safeguarding Governor advised that, as identified in the latest audit, the safeguarding pair had been in school for a housekeeping exercise, and had given the Headteacher a number of policies which required updating (some due for review at this meeting). They had worked together to streamline and future proof the system to make it easier going forward.

It was noted that all governors had now completed ‘Prevent’ training, and that Mrs Grace had completed ‘Educate against hate’ online learning. She agreed to re-send the link to others for review.

Governors for Educate against Hate.

Health & Safety Update

The Headteacher advised that he and the caretaker had completed a full school walk and had identified a number of issues to be addressed during the half term break. David Adams, the Area Education Officer, would visit the school in Term 2 (9 November) and the Headteacher would take the opportunity to highlight his concerns about the perimeter fence.

The Health and Safety governor would contact the Caretaker to arrange a health and safety walk, and would report at the next meeting.

Mr Jones for H&S Walk & Report

9. **Finance**

Six Monthly (September) Monitoring

Governors were advised that when the budget was set, assumptions were made around staffing which had not materialized. There was an in-year deficit, however the school was awaiting additional income for 2 high needs pupils which would be backdated to March (totaling approx.£24,000); a further £10,000 approx was expected in sports premium. Taking this into account, the Headteacher advised that he expected to end the year with a rollover, albeit not as healthy as first predicted. He reiterated the need to identify alternative streams of income, especially in light of anticipated cuts in (high needs) income in FY 2018-19 and set out some existing and potential options.

Governors questioned:

What is the impact at the end of Year 3?

The Headteacher advised that it would impact on the roll-over, and acknowledged that whilst an in-year deficit was acceptable, a deficit at the end of the 3-year plan was not.

Why was backdated income so great?

Governors were advised of the issues experienced by the local authority which had resulted in them delaying payment for claims until January. The Headteacher had an audit trail confirming that payment was due but did



not want to project that income until it was received in the school's account. Additional Sports funding was expected at the end of November.

Do you foresee cuts going forward and what can be done to counter that?

Yes, in real terms there would be less, and the school needed to generate income from other streams. Governors discussed ways this could be done, and the Headteacher referred to TRA arrangements. He spoke of best value and securing cost savings, e.g. reduction in colour photocopying.

Why is there an overspend of around £7000 on E20?

The Headteacher explained that it showed up because the school had not budgeted for this expenditure which, for the most part, was covered by a generous (cheque) donation. The cost to the school had been around £800.

Why has 90% of the budget already been spent on E04?

The contract with the caretaker had been formalized (12.5 hours per week), which was better value for the school in the long term. There was also a need to address some urgent works, and so the sum included an overtime commitment.

What is I18?

That is sports premium funding which was expected to increase to £16,000.

What is the additional sum at E27?

The Headteacher set out his understanding that the school had been responsible for the Acting Headteacher's salary until 31 August, though only budgeted to end July. He spoke of the school's service level agreement with Schools Financial Services which provided reassurance and was particularly helpful given his newness in the role.

Governors thanked the Headteacher and Chair for their input on the six-monthly figures and noted that the expected year-end carry forward had moved to deficit of £22,400. However, they were reassured that this would be mitigated by additional income, not yet factored into the budget. A rollover was anticipated, which would be within the Balance Control Mechanism.

On Capital, the expected out-turn was £5,383.

Voluntary Fund

The Headteacher tabled the audit report. The only issue raised was the need to use full signatures on payment and invoice statements; and governors were assured that this had been actioned – it was now policy that everything was signed with full signatures. Governors were pleased with the positive audit, and the Headteacher agreed to provide a copy for filing with minutes when the Chair had signed off.

The Headteacher paid tribute to Mrs Brignall (Finance Officer) – for her work on the school budget and related finance issues.

Premises

The Headteacher talked through changes which had already been made and those which were planned over the half term break, e.g. removal of stable door and possible installation of bike racks to encourage a healthier option for travelling to school. He advised of a significant water leak over the summer holidays, which had taken more than 4 weeks to resolve. In response to governor questioning, the Headteacher advised that if works cost over £500 they had to be progressed under Class Care.

10. **Policies**

Governors unanimously agreed the following policies:

- **Data Protection** (review 1 year or sooner when updated KCC model policy is made available)
- **Single Equality Statement** (review 4 years)
- **Whistleblowing** (review 3 years)
- **Finance** (review 1 year). The Headteacher explained that he was awaiting advice from SFS on the limit of insurance cover, and talked governors through the delegations, with which they were content.
- **Staff Discipline and Conduct** (review 2 years). Governors were advised that the grievance policy had been separated and was currently under review.
- **Supporting Children with Medical Conditions** (review 2 years)

HT for copy of signed audit for filing with minutes



Health and Safety, remaining Safeguarding related policies and Teachers' Pay & Rewards were due for review in December.

HT for policies

School Website Compliance

The Headteacher gave a preview of the new website. It was agreed that the site should go live on Monday and parents' feedback would be sought, with a review to take place at the end of Term 2.

The School Website governor undertook to complete regular reviews to check compliance with statutory requirements. It was agreed that the Headteacher would upload minutes (public document) to the site. The Headteacher would arrange for **Edubase** to be updated with governors' details.

Governor Services Monthly Update

The clerk advised that the October edition was not available when Kelsi was last checked.

11. Training and Development

The Governing Body would attend annual safeguarding training with the TRA on 6 November.

The Chair, and Training and Development Governor, planned to attend a briefing on 'Be prepared and knowledgeable for Ofsted' on 8 February. Ms Morgan also expressed interest.

12. Any Other Urgent Business

Governors discussed CCTV – no further action at this time.

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 6 December

Wed 31 January

Wed 14 March

Wed 23 May

Wed 11 July

Signed: Date:

Chair of Governors

Bethersden Primary School