



Bethersden Primary School
Minutes of the Full Governing Body (FGB) Meeting
held at the School on Wednesday, 20 September 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; Ms J Read; Ms S Beale (Associate)

Clerk: Lynne Clemitson (KCC Clerking Service)

*For Action
by:*

Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting at 0800 hrs and welcomed governors.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received, and were accepted, from Ms A Morgan and Mr A Jones (both pre-existing work commitments). The meeting was quorate.

2. **Declaration of Business 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

Governors updated. The clerk undertook to provide an updated register for uploading to the school website.

Clerk to follow up with absent governors

Code of Conduct

Governors reviewed and signed to confirm acceptance.

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Ms Read (new governor) signed to confirm she had read, and understood Part 2 (the responsibilities of the governing body). The clerk advised governors that the latest available guidance remained September 2016.

Enhanced DBSs

The Headteacher confirmed that Ms Read's DBSs details had been received and logged in the school's register.

4. **Governing Body (GB) Strategic Planning**

Strategy Review Meeting, 17 July 2017

Governors had met on 17 July to review the GB's effectiveness, and to consider their vision for the school moving forward. The key outcomes from this had been circulated by the Chair in her email to governors dated 18 July (filed with minutes). The Chair provided a verbal synopsis, and governors re-confirmed they were content with the outcomes (see Item 5).

The GB reconfirmed their commitment to 'excellence', a shared vision for Bethersden Primary School.

Skills Matrix

The updated matrix would be presented at the next meeting.

Clerk

Attendance Data for 2016-17

The timing of meetings had been brought forward to 0800 hrs to enable governors to attend, and this worked for the majority. The Chair expressed gratitude for governors' commitment, and encouraged full attendance in the year ahead.

Monitoring Reports for 2016-17

The Health and Safety report from Term 6 had been shared in advance of the meeting.

Due to extenuating circumstances, monitoring had not been as comprehensive as intended in 2016-17. However, governors discussed and agreed an innovative approach for 2017-18 which was expected to yield excellence. Visits would entail time in class, liaising with teachers, staff and pupils; book looks; monitoring against specific areas of the School Improvement Plan, and would consider the impact of School policies. Reports would be written up at the end of the session, before leaving School, and progress on follow-up actions could subsequently be managed by email, as



necessary. Governors would set aside time to agree the foci for the next monitoring visit. The Chair asked that governors dedicate the whole morning (following FGBs) for this purpose. The Headteacher confirmed that there was a section within the SIP to evidence the impact of GB monitoring.

Governance Structure

The existing ‘circle’ structure worked well, and was unanimously re-endorsed as the GB’s preferred operating model for 2017-18.

5. **GB Operating Standards**

Terms of Reference and Standing Orders

Governors unanimously endorsed the Terms of Reference without change. The clerk advised of KCC advice on virtual governance, and how this was not intended for decision-making by email. Following consideration, governors agreed to retain the Standing Order on virtual governance, including use of email in exceptional circumstances (e.g. to respond to urgent time-critical matters when it might not always be possible to convene a meeting at short notice). The Chair asked that the minutes reflect the GB’s intention to develop a secure means of communication to enable governors to hold an email exchange around decision-making.

All existing standing orders were unanimously adopted.

Delegation Planner

Unanimously agreed, without change.

Teams and Link Roles

Governors favoured having a named class governor who could be invited to celebrations and events, and better get to know the children, teachers and staff in their class. To ensure everyone was working together, the named class governor would also be supported. The arrangements, set out in the table below, were confirmed.

Class	Governor
Elm	Mr Jones (supported by Mrs Buckman and Revd Denyer)
Ash	Mrs Carysforth (supported by Ms Beale)
Beech	Mrs Read (supported by Mrs Grace)
Oak	Mrs Foley (supported by Ms Morgan)
Chestnut	Mr Harris (supported by Mr Clark)

Teams

Team membership was reconfirmed:

Leadership & Management	Teaching & Learning	Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare	Outcomes
Mrs Buckman Mr Harris Mr Clark	Mrs Grace Mrs Read Ms Beale	Mrs Carysforth Mr Jones Mrs Foley Revd Denyer	Mrs Buckman Ms Morgan

Designated Responsibilities

Governors agreed to take on specific remits, sharing or mentoring in some areas:

Safeguarding	Mrs Carysforth Revd Denyer
Health & Safety	Mr Jones Mr Harris
Early Years	Mrs Buckman Revd Denyer
Finance	Mrs Buckman Mrs Read
Special Needs, Pupil Premium & Attendance	Ms Morgan
Training	Mrs Carysforth
School Website & Edubase	Mrs Foley



Headteacher's Performance Management and Pay Panel

Governors confirmed the composition: Mrs Buckman and Ms Morgan, supported by Ruth Swailes (external consultant). The Headteacher confirmed that the arrangement with Ms Swailes had been formalised, and governors would liaise over a meeting date [subsequently confirmed as 28 November 2018 at 1300 hrs].

6. **Minutes of Meetings held on 13 July 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.

7. **Matters Arising** (not covered elsewhere on this agenda)

- **Timing of GB Chair and Vice Chair Elections**

Mr Harris' appointment as Vice Chair would come to an end on 18 October 2017. Nominations would be sought for the position of Vice Chair at the next GB meeting on 18 October.

Agenda Item

Mrs Buckman's 2-year term as Chair of Governors would be completed on 19 January 2018. Chair elections would be held at the December meeting.

Agenda Item

- **HTPM for Mr Westmoreland**

The Chair confirmed that action was in hand to complete this.

- **Updated School Self Evaluation Summary (SEF)**

This was tabled at the meeting.

- **Kent Learning Zone (KLZ)**

The Headteacher explained that KLZ provided an email and drop box facility for papers. He encouraged use of the new School Website database, which could host a forum for governors. This was expected to go live in Term 2, and training would be provided.

The Headteacher took governors through the new website, providing an overview, and explaining how it would support new and improved stakeholder and community links, and include a range of online safeguarding training for children and parents.

Governors for photographs/biographies by end of September.

At the Headteacher's request, governors agreed to provide a short biography, and to have their photographs included on the website. These could be taken professionally by the school photographer (on 19/20 September), or governors were free to submit a suitable image for uploading.

8. **School Plan**

Inset Day

For the benefit of those governors who had not been able to attend Inset Day on 4 September, the Headteacher outlined the key issues covered. The session opened with the launch of his vision – '**dedicated to excellence**'. It had been positively received by staff, and was now frequently referred to in school. Staff had been asked to consider 4 areas: what Betersden was already good at; what the school wanted to improve upon; dreams and aspirations; things staff did but didn't understand why. The Headteacher shared feedback with governors, and explained how that had led to review of the presentation policy, and the feedback and marking policy which was currently under consideration. A key focus had been the time-consuming and manual process of managing '21 Steps', resulting in a decision to move to the more user-friendly Target Tracker.

Governors questioned:

- **Why Target Tracker?**

The Headteacher explained that this was a considered decision (they had looked at streamlining '21 Steps' but still ended up with a cumbersome and time-consuming mechanism). Target Tracker was used by over 6,500 schools nationwide, and had been adopted by all other Tenterden Rural Alliance (TRA) schools. It linked more closely with the interim framework, facilitated moderation not only with the TRA but county-wide, and provided a more robust system for statutory reporting. Teachers wanted it – it was much more efficient – saving significant manpower hours which could in future be devoted to planning. The Headteacher explained that he had discussed it with the Senior Improvement Adviser (Fiona Wainde) who had wholeheartedly supported.

- **Can it be used to produce reports?**



Yes, it was possible to run a wide selection of management information reports, e.g. age-related summary reports. They could be broken down using filters, to produce reports on e.g. class, year, or vulnerable groups, those with 90% attendance, or whole school data.

- **How secure is the data?**

Data was all fully encrypted, and could only be accessed through Target Tracker software with a security key. There was a triple lock in terms of back-up. If someone accidentally wiped data, it was possible to retrieve the last 15 back-ups.

- **Do you need to evidence the data against the children's books?**

No, it was about teacher judgements. However, achievements were recorded in specific terms, so it would be possible to link to evidence in children's books at that time. The system tracked progress and provided a KS2 expectation based on KS1 SATs, though there was scope to manually override this (e.g. for a child with special needs).

- **For more able and high achieving children, do they go beyond year group?**

No, they move to mastery. Target tracker enabled the school to pinpoint the level of mastery children had achieved at a given time. It was particularly helpful for gap analysis.

- **Is there anything which works better with 21 Steps?**

No, Target Tracker was superior in every way.

The summer 2017 data would be uploaded and used at the benchmark. The Headteacher explained the transition from '21 Steps' to Target Tracker, and how attainment and progress could be interpreted. Parents and governor would be briefed on the new system. The Headteacher reiterated that Target Tracker was teacher-driven, and the whole team were committed to use this to provide excellence in school. He had been pleased with the level of transparency, and passion, evident on Inset Day, and wanted to reduce staff and teacher workload to boost the quality of outcomes.

The Chair endorsed the Headteacher's messages. From the GB's perspective, they had observed teachers and staff working as a team; there had been a buzz about the day, and their enthusiasm was palpable. She thanked the Headteacher for including governors.

School Improvement Plan (SIP) Priorities and Targets for 2017-18

The Headteacher tabled the outline SIP and invited governors to make observations. The Plan included the 4 key areas, plus Early Years as he believed it was essential to give children an excellent start. The full and final SIP would be available at the next meeting. He talked through the key priorities, with reference to the 2017 attainment and progress data.

- Attendance, and persistent absenteeism (27.6%) was a significant concern. Unauthorised absence was also rising.
- The number achieving Good Levels of Development (GLD) – although in line with Kent Schools - should be higher because of the smaller class sizes.
- Phonics was a key focus (down in 2017 and below Kent) – there was a big push on 'sounds' teaching.
- The Head and Deputy Headteacher had met during the summer holidays and had agreed a number of improvements: more staff had been devoted to Read Write Inc (RWI) which was proven to work, and a 4-day scheme had been adopted, with opportunities for extended writing on day 4 (this would support moderation). The aim was to regain their RWI model school status.

The Chair commented on the disconnect between reading and writing – the former had always been a strength. The Headteacher reiterated that writing was now a priority. RWI was expected to facilitate an uplift in English.

- In terms of strengths, KS1 maths had improved on 2016 and was significantly above Kent at 'expected'. However, Greater Depth would be a focus at KS1 (below Kent in every area).
- In 2017, KS2 progress in reading was significantly improved 1.6 (0.3 in Kent); in writing 0.5 (better than Kent and significantly better than 0.2 in 2016); but less than expected in maths at -3.9 (-0.2 for Kent). Maths progress would therefore be a major focus in 2017-18.



- Another key area would be diminishing the difference for pupil premium children.

A governor (also teacher at the school) identified the higher level of challenge in the new curriculum which had impacted. He advised that the new expectation of Year 2 was roughly equivalent to Year 4, and concepts in Year 6 were previously at GCSE maths level. Children were having to play catch-up and there was lots of gap filling to do.

What is it in reading that makes that progress measure so good?

Many KS2 pupils started on RWI, built skills and had the opportunity to address gaps. It was also cohort-specific – some very strong readers.

Governors endorsed these key priorities for 2017-18.

GB Objectives and Monitoring Plan

Governors agreed that the monitoring schedule, linked to SIP priorities, would be agreed and embarked upon at the next meeting. The monitoring report template was under review.

9. **Safeguarding**

Referring to the Safeguarding Review tool completed in Term 6, the Safeguarding Governor advised of planned follow-up work in relation to policies. She would arrange a date convenient with Revd Denyer (also safeguarding) to come into school to review these.

SC/Revd. for action on policies

The Headteacher informed governors that he had no safeguarding concerns to bring to their attention.

Annual Safeguarding Training

Staff training through the TRA had already taken place, with every member of staff (bar 2 with pre-existing commitments) participating. Annual safeguarding training for governors was scheduled for 1800hrs on 6 November at Homewood, and governors would need to reserve their places through CPD. The Chair asked all members of the GB to attend.

All GB to complete safeguarding training on 6 Nov – book via CPD

Prevent

Outstanding ‘prevent’ certificates needed to be sent to the school office for the safeguarding file. Mrs Read confirmed that she had already done so.

GB for ‘Prevent’ if not already done

‘Educate against Hate’

Mrs Grace commended this online resource to the GB. Although not applicable to primary children, it had been extremely useful, with relevant ‘teenage’ case studies which she believed governors could learn from. Governors thanked Mrs Grace and undertook to complete this training ([link here](#)). Certificates should be sent to the Training Governor.

GB for online training

Health & Safety Update

Governors were content with Mr Jones’ Health and Safety monitoring report from Term 6. It was suggested that he complete another ‘walk’ with the Headteacher with the aim of reporting at the December meeting.

AJ/Headteacher for H&S Walk

10.

Finance

Mrs Brignall (Finance Officer) joined the meeting to brief governors.

KCC Feedback on 3 Year Plan

Mrs Brignall talked governors through the points raised in the feedback:

- I01 was greater due to changes in High Needs Funding;
- E03 Year 2 figure was less than previous year because TA costings were based on High Needs Funding in Year 1 only.

Governors were aware of the percentage of income devoted to staffing costs in Year 1, and of the forecast in-year deficit in Year 3. There were no other matters to be addressed. A copy of the feedback was filed with minutes.

Budget Update (August 2017)

The latest data had been shared with governors in advance of the meeting. There were no issues of concern. September’s monitoring would be reported on at the next meeting.



Premises

The Headteacher advised governors of DfE's plans to undertake a facilities visit in October.

11.

Compliance Visit, 5 July

The list of recommendations for action was tabled:

General Governance (Ref.1.02b) - The GB to ensure recommendations from compliance were actioned. The Headteacher confirmed that all bank statements were now countersigned with full signatures by himself and the Finance Officer, as well as date stamped.

Financial Control: Bank, Corporate Card and Payroll Monthly Statements

Ref.3.01b & Ref.4.01b – The Headteacher confirmed that all documents were now countersigned with full signatures by himself and the Finance Officer, as well as date stamped.

Ref.3.03a & Ref.4.01a – The Headteacher confirmed that all documents were now countersigned with full signatures by himself and the Finance Officer, as well as date stamped.

Ref.3.01c, Ref.3.03c & Ref.4.01c - The Headteacher confirmed that all documents were now countersigned with full signatures by himself and the Finance Officer, as well as date stamped.

Payroll: Payroll Starters (Ref.4.02a) – The Headteacher confirmed that the school had in place a Single Central Register for all staff with at least the following information: name, identity check, barred list, enhanced DBS, prohibition from teaching, qualifications, right to work and overseas checks.

Procurement: Invoices (Ref.5.02d) – The Headteacher confirmed that all invoices and receipts were now authorised with full signatures (not initialled).

Health and Safety

Ref. 7.01a – The Headteacher confirmed that the fire risk assessment was in the process of being updated.

Ref. 7.01b – The Headteacher advised that the Legionella risk assessment was dated 2 November 2016 (within the last 2 years) and he was in touch with Amey to track down the certificate. The next visit was 2 November.

The Headteacher confirmed that he had responded to the Compliance team (by email) to advise that actions had now been completed and everything was in place.

The Chair thanked the Headteacher, and asked that the minutes also record the GB's thanks to Mrs Brignall for her efforts in the run up to the compliance audit.

Mrs Brignall retired from the meeting at this juncture.

12.

Policies

Governors unanimously agreed the following policies:

- **Safeguarding** (behaviour and safety), subject to changing name of safeguarding governor to Mrs Carysforth. Next review, September 2018

The Headteacher highlighted the additional steps taken by Bethersden, including an induction leaflet for all staff, governors and parents. To ensure every new child had the best possible start, a letter went to sending schools asking them to let Bethersden know of any safeguarding concerns.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads were Mr Gawthorpe (Headteacher) and Ms Bowden (Inclusion Manager). Two other members of staff would undergo training in January 2018.

- **Special Needs**, subject to any final comments from governors. Review September 2018.
- **Business Continuity Plan**, review September 2018.
The Church had agreed in principle to be used as a refuge point (subject to confirmation from the PCC). The church and village hall would be used to accommodate classes in the event of closure of the school.



Governors were content to defer the following policies:

- Data Protection (awaiting new policy template from KCC)
- Single Equality Statement
- Whistleblowing
- Behaviour (to allow for a whole school review and consultation with stakeholders)
- Marking, Feedback and Assessment
- Learning and Teaching.

The Headteacher briefed governors on the updated **Presentation Policy** (non-statutory). It had been updated and made explicit the minimum expectation. Governors would be able to refer to this when monitoring and undertaking 'book looks'. A revised pro-forma for this purpose reflected the new 'excellence' standards. The policy would be reviewed again in 2 years, sooner if necessary.

How are children responding?

The Headteacher explained that the expectation e.g. of joined up handwriting, had always existed. The only difference was that the expectation was now formalised within the policy.

A governor explained their concern to ensure that the updated policy was working and questioned whether it needed to be reviewed before 2 years. The Headteacher explained that the policy had been negotiated with staff, one of the aims was to provide consistency. It would of course be reviewed sooner should there be a need.

The Chair encouraged governors to talk to the children about this school policy during their visits – pupil voice was a significant element of monitoring.

13. **Governor Services Monthly Update**

Not available at the time of the meeting. The clerk undertook to circulate September's bulletin when online.

Clerk

14. **Any Other Urgent Business**

On behalf of the GB, the Chair asked that the minutes reflect their gratitude to the **Adams Trust, Bethersden Charitable Trust** and **Friends of Bethersden School** for their generous donations which had enabled the school to purchase 32 laptops. Thanks were also due to Mr Clark for his time spent on research, to ensure the school obtained the most robust and best value equipment.

15. **Chair's Correspondence/Actions**

Actions and correspondence were recorded under relevant agenda items.

16. **Confidentiality**

No items were considered to be of a confidential nature.

17. **Meeting Dates for 2017-18**

Meeting dates for the remainder of 2017-18 were reconfirmed. Governors were reminded to set aside the whole morning in order to conduct monitoring.

Meeting Dates:
2017-18
Wed 18 October
Wed 6
December
Wed 31 January
Wed 14 March
Wed 23 May
Wed 11 July

Before governors departed, the Headteacher took the opportunity to say a few words. He expressed his joy at being with the school. It had been a very busy 2 weeks and 2 days, and he had been made to feel very welcome, including some very positive conversations in the playground. He very much looked forward to building on this in the weeks and months ahead.

Signed: Date:

Chair of Governors
Bethersden Primary School