



Bethersden Primary School
Minutes of the Extraordinary Full Governing Body (FGB) Meeting
held at the School on Wednesday, 26 September 2018 at 1000 hrs

Present: Mrs S Buckman (Chair); Mr S Gawthorpe (Headteacher); Mrs S Carysforth; Mrs G Foley; Mrs W Grace; Mr A Jones; Ms A Morgan; Mrs J Read; Mr E Uebel.
Clerk: Lynne Clemitson (KCC Clerking Service)

Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting at 0805 hrs and welcomed governors.

1. Statutory Reporting

- No apologies for absence had been received. The meeting was quorate.
- There were no business interests to declare against any item on the agenda.
- The Chair introduced Mr Eric Uebel who had expressed interest in joining the governing board: introductions followed. Mr Uebel gave a brief verbal resume of his background and experience and governors unanimously endorsed his four year appointment to the governing body as a co-opted governor commencing with immediate effect and ending on 25 September 2022.
- Governors updated their business and pecuniary interest declarations.
- Governors unanimously adopted the Code of Conduct.
- Updated DfE Guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education which came into effect on 3 September had been shared with governors; they had been asked to sign to confirm they had read and understood their responsibilities. The Headteacher undertook to print off the declaration for governors' signature.
- The Governing Body's Terms of Reference and Standing Orders had been reviewed and was endorsed for a further year, without change.
- The Delegation Planner was adopted.
- Governors' attendance data for 2017-18 had been shared, and would be uploaded to the school website.

The Chair highlighted the need for full governor participation; she noted that meeting times did not accommodate all, but had necessarily been set to accommodate the majority. Virtual attendance was an option.

- Membership of the Headteacher Performance Management and Pay Panel had been agreed at governors' strategy meeting (minutes of 12 September refer). The next performance review meeting, alongside Ruth Swailes (independent member), would take place on 2 October 2018.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes dated 11 July and 12 September were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of those meetings. Minutes were left with the Headteacher for filing in school. A governor commented on the improvement in the governing body's challenge and questioning evident in the minutes; it demonstrated how the governing body was operating more effectively.

3 Chair's Report

Referring to the strategy meeting of 12 September, the Chair reiterated the need for streamlined and effective monitoring of school plan priorities to improve outcomes for pupils. She invited governors to hold an informal review meeting.

4. Head Teacher's Report

The Head Teacher tabled his report and provided a verbal account of each of the five Ofsted areas. Some of the key points which stimulated governor questioning covered:

- The school's percentage of non-white English and disadvantaged students currently on roll – the Headteacher confirmed numbers were above the national average.
- Transition had been successful and Reception children had settled in well. **A governor (with children in school) commented positively on her own family's experience, and the governing body noted the impact of holding home visits in the afternoons. The Chair commented on the synergies of the Early Years' team and expressed appreciation on behalf of the governing board.**
- Governors commended the school for building links with Kench Hill which they described as a truly impressive facility.
- Strengthening collaboration with other schools was evolving and provided pupils with opportunities which may otherwise not be open to them, e.g. the recent visit to Vimy Ridge in France.
- **Governors questioned the impact of the restructured leadership team:** the Headteacher confirmed that with reduced capacity things were not happening as quickly – the theme for this year was 'less but better'. **A governor commented on the need to be more strategic** - the brevity of the school plan meant greater energy could be expended on quality of teaching and learning.
- The Headteacher updated governors on personnel issues, including Teachers' Pay (recorded in minutes, part 2).
- A governor (member of staff) spoke about the project he was undertaking for his NPQSL – introducing 'Maths Talk' throughout the school. Ms Morgan (departing governor) offered her support. Miss Young's project for her middle leadership qualification covered Language in the Early Years environment.



- **Governors questioned how progress was monitored, and benchmarks were set, for higher achieving pupils.** The Headteacher cited an example, and also explained what the school was doing to diminish the difference. There were **further questions on how the curriculum supported greater depth** and the Headteacher clarified that pupils were given opportunities to apply and reason using the knowledge they had acquired. **Governors asked if there was ever a situation where teaching and learning progressed to the following year's curriculum,** and the Headteacher indicated there were situations when teachers might dip into it. **A governor asked if pupils understood the focus on greater depth and if teachers encountered challenge, i.e. children choosing to move themselves on, particularly in maths.** The Headteacher explained that self-assessment was not discouraged but had to be carefully managed. At Bethersden children peer checked and utilised challenge cards. Greater depth was also a priority target for 2018-19.
- **Governors applauded the improvement in attendance** – moving the school out of the bottom quintile to the third quintile. More work needed to be done, and a letter had issued to parents advising of the school's intention to progress penalty notices this year. **Governors discussed the correlation between attendance and pupil outcomes (those with less than 95% attendance and failed to meet the SATs benchmark).** A governor expressed concern about penalties, and the effectiveness of these. The Headteacher advised that persistent absence, closely followed by unauthorised holiday, were the biggest issues. He cited an example of a family who failed to respond to numerous offers of support and highlighted the school's duty of care (safeguarding) for the child. **In response to further governor questioning, the Headteacher confirmed that Bethersden rigorously followed school policy. Governors noted that improving attendance was an Ofsted action point.**
- The Headteacher encouraged governors to visit the Early Years learning environment which had been commended by the school improvement adviser on her recent visit.
- **Governors noted the significant input by Mrs Grace and Mrs Green (over the summer holidays) to develop a high quality indoor and outdoor learning environment dedicated to Year 1. It was much appreciated.**
- Governors were pleased to learn that the cleaning and telephone contracts had been reviewed and action was in hand to ensure the school received best value. **Governors questioned the impact of any changes, including any indirect financial repercussions** and were satisfied with the action the Headteacher proposed. They also welcomed the savings negotiated on toilet roll dispensers.
- The **Chair advised of the local community's appreciation for the school children's involvement in serving refreshments in church** and was delighted to learn of pupils' participation in the upcoming Remembrance Day Service. She reminded the Headteacher of the continuing interest of the cricket club to develop their links with the school.
- **Governors discussed the proposal for swimming lessons this year** and how children might be expected to achieve national expectation. The Staff Governor (a qualified swim instructor) set out her approach to staying safe in the water. There was some discussion of Uswim and Ewe Swim Smarden, as well as the impact of transportation costs.
- **Governors discussed developments in the Tenterden Rural Alliance (TRA)** and noted that subscriptions would not be requested this year. The Headteacher briefed governors on potential changes and developments. **Governors noted that the TRA would deliver safeguarding training for governors (annual update) on 19 November, 6.00-8.00 pm, at Homewood.**
- **Given the increasing outreach role of the school's pastoral support worker, governors wanted to know how this impacted on Bethersden.** The Headteacher advised of provision mapping, and the school's monitoring of interventions for impact – it would be more strategically managed this year.
- The Headteacher briefed governors on the data return from last year and discussed how progress measures had been impacted; he had case studies to support. He also expressed concerns around some of the historic data.

Governors thanked the Headteacher for his report.

5. Safeguarding

One safeguarding referral had been made in July. The Headteacher had attended the latest safeguarding briefing last week. Greater emphasis had been given to online safety (staff would receive training on this, alongside Wittersham staff, on 4 January – governors were welcome to attend). The Headteacher had taken 38 action points from the latest training, and advised of 17 new policies which sat within Keeping Children Safe in Education. He listed a number of policies which required updating and confirmed that these would be actioned when KCC released the new templates. When available, relevant policies would be published on the school website in line with statutory requirements. A governor asked how staff would be advised of practical changes. The Headteacher confirmed that they had attended training; he made the point that for most the changes were not significant – they were mainly for the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead. He also highlighted the duty on governors to alert the safeguarding team to any issues and provided contact details. One governor asked if it would be possible to have cards made up with the referral details – the Headteacher pointed out that this information was clearly displayed on all the safeguarding posters around school, and visitors were asked to sign and read a declaration held in the Reception area.

No other concerns or issues were raised at this time.

6. Policies

The Headteacher advised that the existing policy review timetable was now redundant and shared a template document taken from 'The Key'. He would use the template as the basis for an updated review timetable for the School and, in response to the Chair's request, undertook to ensure it was explicit on governors' responsibilities.



7. Any Other (urgent) Business

- The Chair advised that wrap around care and responsibilities of schools would be addressed as a separate agenda item at the next meeting.
- The clerk sought clarification on governors' designated responsibilities, e.g. for safeguarding/child protection, Special Needs, Finance, Training and Development. Governors confirmed this had been covered at the strategy meeting and referred to the minutes of 12 September.
- The Chair asked the clerk to minute an extraordinary meeting immediately following the full governing body meeting; the clerk consented.
- In her valedictory remarks, Ms Morgan said it had been a privilege and pleasure to support the school over the last 3 years, which had witnessed some significant change. She had enjoyed every minute of her time as a governor and commended staff, pupils and governors (particularly the Chair) for their contributions. Ms Morgan said she would be happy to help out, should the school need support with ad hoc projects in future. In response, the Chair expressed deep appreciation for the contribution and commitment Ms Morgan had given during her term of office; the Training and Development Governor thanked Ms Morgan for all she had taught her, and the Staff Governor, whilst sharing staff disappointment at losing Ms Morgan, reiterated that Ms Morgan had been a great asset to the school and would be missed. This sentiment resonated through the governing body.

8. Confidentiality

Governors agreed that some items were of a confidential nature, and should be recorded in minutes, part 2.

Signed: Date:

Chair of Governors
Bethersden Primary School