



Bethersden Primary School
Minutes (part 1) of the Full Governing Body (FGB) Meeting
held at the School on Wednesday, 31 January 2018 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; Ms A Morgan; Ms J Read
Clerk: Lynne Clemitson (KCC Clerking Service)

For Action by:

Welcome

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

1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received, and were accepted, from Mr A Jones (unforeseen commitment) and Miss Beale (non-work day). Mrs Foley had advised of her late arrival at 0900 hrs. 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. **Minutes of 6 December 2017**

The minutes (part 1) had been shared with governors in advance and were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record – clerk to remove watermark and send to Chair (via Headteacher) for signature. It was noted that the minutes (part 2), had been reviewed and agreed at the 11 January 2018 extraordinary meeting.

Clerk for action

Minutes of 11 January 2018

Confidential Minutes from the Extraordinary Meeting held on 11 January were tabled. Every governor was given an opportunity to review before they were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate representation of that meeting. Minutes were left with the Headteacher for secure filing in school.

4. **Matters Arising**

Governor Biographies

The Headteacher confirmed that all had been received.

Clerk for action

Business and Pecuniary Interests

The clerk believed that all were now in place, but undertook to check this.

Governing Body Skills Matrix

The clerk agreed to circulate.

5. **GB Succession Planning**

The meeting was sorry to learn of Mr S Harris' resignation due to ongoing work commitments. His significant contribution during his time as governor was noted. Governors unanimously agreed that the Chair should write a note of thanks on their behalf and, given Mr Harris' valuable skills and experience, invite him to remain as an Associate Member (without voting rights). Governors agreed that Mr Harris should not be required to attend regular GB meetings, though may be called upon to support specific projects where he could add considerable value.

Chair to write to Mr Harris and report back to next FGB

Governors agreed that the clerk should issue paperwork for election of a Vice Chair at the next full governors' meeting. A new link governor would be needed for Chestnut Class.

Election of VC & New Link Governor

Enhanced DBSs

The Chair confirmed that Mr A Patience (Associate Member with limited voting rights) had been asked to progress his enhanced DBS application for the Single Central Register.

6. **Headteacher's Report linked to the School Plan**

The report had been made available to governors in advance of the meeting, and the Headteacher highlighted some of the key points.

School Context

The school roll had increased from 122 to 127 to date. The school was tracking pupils with multiple vulnerabilities, including persistent absentees. Attendance had improved on last year, and now stood at 94.13%.

Governors questioned:

- **What action has been taken to address attendance?**

The Headteacher advised of initial (Family Liaison Officer approach) and follow-up actions (by Mrs L Thompson, support staff), including issuing more letters around attendance and lateness. The school was engaged with families and offering support at the earliest opportunity; they were also working with KCC to facilitate best outcomes for pupils. Currently there were no pupils below 80% attendance (though one on the cusp).

- **Is the rate of absence due to sickness?**

The Headteacher confirmed that the majority was due to sickness, but said there were also other reasons for this. He advised that a case file was prepared for any pupil whose absence fell below 95% and how this was managed. Letters were sent to parents and impacts recorded. He also set out circumstances in which parents were called into school to discuss their child's absence and consider how best the school could support.



- **Had fines been issued?**

The Headteacher confirmed that the school referred families to the School Liaison Officer at Kent County Council (KCC) and they decided whether to fine.

Things to Celebrate

The Chair and Revd Denyer commended pupils for their contribution to cake and coffee afternoons at Bethersden Church – they had both received very positive feedback from members of the community.

Leadership and Management

The Headteacher reconfirmed that assessment tracking was in place and robust **pupil progress meetings had taken place each term, the first (in Term 1) attended by the Chair, and the second attended by the Outcomes Governor.** The Headteacher invited governors to comment.

The Chair explained that Target Tracker had only recently been introduced when she attended the Term 1 session, and the focus was support for staff in its use, and ensuring data was as it should be. The Outcomes Governor advised that she had observed one of the teachers during her visit, and commented that they had ‘really grasped Target Tracker’ and were using it to ‘bring forward children who needed support’. She would prepare a governor monitoring report of her visit of 12 January and circulate to governors.

AM for
monitoring report

- **Are staff finding Target Track an effective tool?**

A co-opted governor (also member of staff) commented that Target Tracker would be much easier when staff had mastered it. The Headteacher, who had significant experience with it, would be working with teachers later that day to create a reference document for their use.

The Staff Governor explained how she used Target Tracker to monitor progress of children in **guided reading sessions.** Whilst it was an assessment tool, she was also using it to support lesson (maths) planning and found it most useful.

The Headteacher advised that there was an option for a Governor account on Target Tracker giving access to anonymised data; training on it could be arranged. The Headteacher commented that he had felt very supported and challenged by the Governing Body.

Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

When the Improvement Adviser (Ruth Swailes) visited on 28 November she had commented on the progress made since the Senior Improvement Adviser’s report the month before, with 86% Good, and 14% R1. One teacher had demonstrated outstanding features but needed more consistency for the judgement to reflect this. New policies were embedded, and Bethersden was collaborating with, and receiving support from, High Halden (Head Kelly Burlton) and Great Chart (Head Wendy Pang).

- **How are the new policies, e.g. Learning and Teaching, Marking and Feedback, helping to improve?**

The Ofsted Inspector had commented on the significant difference in the books from Term 1 to Term 2; external moderators had also commented on it since introduction of the new policies on 20 October. The atmosphere and learning environments were now much more conducive to learning: children understood the expectations more clearly, and this was evidenced in the significant improvement in their workbooks.

Governors who were also teachers in school shared their own observations from a number of classes, about children being on task, and their attitude to learning.

- **Is this because the children now receive a consistent message?**

Yes, the approaches introduced by the new Headteacher were now embedded and so children were receiving consistent messages. The Headteacher referred to the Senior Improvement Adviser’s positive comments on the learning walls (when she attended on 23 January); she had also observed that policies were acted on in the classroom environment.

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

Governors noted the improvement on last year and that nineteen children had 100% attendance. Although reducing, persistent absence remained a significant issue which the school was robustly tackling. The Family Liaison Officer (FLO) role had been redefined and had proven effective to date.

There had been no exclusions or safeguarding issues.

The Headteacher advised of strategies to increase attendance at coffee mornings which would be themed and include pupil participation.

- **How was the Behaviour Log impacting?**

Staff concerns over behaviour or welfare (not safeguarding) were logged and retained in a folder held securely in the Headteacher’s Office. The chronological ‘note of concern’ recorded nature of incident(s) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) actions to address these, and was reviewed weekly. Staff could review the folder and be confident that senior leaders in school had taken appropriate action. If incidents built up over time, relevant referrals and/or support could be offered and provided.

Outcomes for Pupils, including Pupil Premium

The Headteacher and staff would work together to produce a map to find their way around Target Tracker. Target Tracker was being used for Early Years to give a measure of progress going into Year 1: Although the 2 curriculums were very different, Target Tracker provided an insight to children’s level of development and how best to support them moving forward.



The latest Outcomes data was 63% for reading and maths, 60% writing and 52% Combined Age-Related Expected. This was an improvement on the end of last year, but there was still some way to go to reach target.

- **What is the national average?**

The Headteacher advised that it was 77% combined last year. Bethersden forecast 72%, broadly in line. The Headteacher undertook to include this information, including greater depth, in future Headteacher's reports in order to give context to the school's data. He had attended a training session on assessments on 30 January, and would share learning with the Year 6 teacher. He relayed the targets for KS2 (76%) with 18% greater depth (below national but above Fischer Family Trust (FFT)); 85% combined at KS1.

The Outcomes Governor spoke of the relevance and need to match FFT data.

Governors referred to progress and attainment data for Term 2.

- **Was the school diminishing the difference for pupil premium (PP) children?**

The Headteacher explained that more needed to be done to support those children. Children with more than one vulnerability were being tracked as a target group: 14 pupils were in this category (covering special needs, pupil premium and persistent absentees): the majority of the group were PP children. The school was also monitoring those with low starting points in Early Years. They were building a picture of support, when it was provided, and its impact.

- **Does 'summer born' have an impact?**

It was a consideration. In terms of PP, there were 4 boys and 15 girls, and over half were summer born. The school had seen an increase in PP of 33%.

The Headteacher explained that he had set up some specific groups on Target Tracker to enable teachers to drill down to their data. Governors were advised of other strategies adopted by teachers to highlight the need for quality feedback in children's workbooks. The Headteacher relayed a comment from a recent visitor that it had enabled them to more easily identify the school's priorities.

- **Would the school receive additional funding for the increased PP number?**

The school would receive additional funding for 3 out of the 5 new arrivals. The Headteacher outlined the circumstances of 2 children and, in response to governor questioning, advised that Bethersden had received no funding support for them.

The Headteacher informed governors that, starting in Term 4, Mrs S Green (senior teacher) would be working with groups of PP children to accelerate their learning through 'excellence time'. He explained the difference between this and the former model (champions' time). There would now be greater focus on education, with excellence time devoted to outcomes.

- **What percentage of PP children have familial issues?**

The Headteacher advised of the numbers who had been referred to Early Help and those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). He relayed numbers around attendance, and the high proportion below 90%.

- **In terms of PP funding, how does the school intend to invest the money to improve those pupils' outcomes?**

A PP spending code would in future be included in the budget software to more easily identify and track income and expenditure. Some of the funding would be used to cover the cost of 'excellence time', and the impact of this would be regularly monitored and measured, and quickly changed if necessary. Funds were also used to support families with after school clubs and the Headteacher gave an example of fund-matching which currently occurred and had a positive impact on wellbeing. PP also paid for a panto trip for some of those children who would otherwise not have had that experience. Funding was used for enrichment experiences, for smaller group work and staff training.

PP funding would also be used to pay for a bespoke package prepared by the Educational Psychology Service to be piloted in school in April. If successful, it would be sold as a service to other schools

The Headteacher advised that he was about to rewrite the pupil premium report.

- **For summer born pupils, what was the timescale for that impacting, i.e. over what period did it have an effect?**

Governors were informed that whilst summer-born was a recognised vulnerability, the impact may not be significant in isolation; indeed some summer born were high achievers. Often the impact was most noticeable in Reception, diminishing as the child moved through the school.

- **What is your (Headteacher's) greatest concern overall in terms of outcomes?**

The Headteacher referred to Key Stage 2 and the Year 2 ARE data, setting out what he believed to be the reason(s) for the latter and actions now in place to provide consistency and accelerate learning for that group. The Staff Governor (also HLTA) explained her work on phonics, and assured the meeting that all pupils were regularly assessed, and all were now at the level of phonics screening base. There was a continuing need for dedicated phonics time for one pupil, and this would now be managed by the Class teacher.

The Outcomes Governor, who had completed a monitoring visit on 12 January (report awaited), noted that data had already much improved.

- **What was the current Year 1 expectation on Phonics?**

85% and the Headteacher believed this was a realistic expectation. The Staff Governor (HLTA) advised that she was using a combination of 'sounds' cards and Read Write Inc, and was challenging the children every day with new alien and



complex words which were now part of the phonics screening test. The timetable included guided reading sessions, and small group work on e.g. sounds.

- **For the Year 2 cohort, will the school close the gap by end of year?**

At the end of Reception, the cohort were 40% age appropriate; by end of Year 1 it was 55%. The school was focused on accelerating progress for this cohort and, when last assessed, they were 70% age appropriate.

The Headteacher acknowledged the work done by the HLTA to develop RWI into Reading, Writing, Excellence, and thanked her for this; it had impacted significantly on the data and had been noted. The HLTA explained that she had developed RWE so that it worked for Bethersden's pupils.

With regards Year 6, the Co-opted Governor (who was also Chestnut Class teacher) advised that he was in contact with an outstanding teacher from Ashford Oaks Primary and would be linking with them to share best practice. He relayed his moderation experience with High Halden and how this had impacted; there was now greater challenge, especially for more able pupils, and a sharper focus on evidencing attainment. The Headteacher advised that the quality of writing had improved significantly since September. He referred to Ash Class, and invited governors to view their new writing display which was a testament to the improvement.

The Headteacher advised that he had commissioned Penny Bill, KCC literacy leader, to look at English teaching and to help with planning from high quality texts. She would produce an exemplar model for each year group to demonstrate how this could be achieved.

Early Years

Governors noted the improvement in the internal learning environment which had been decluttered; the focus was now on the exterior. Funds raised from the sale of unused furniture, plus 2 interactive whiteboards, would be ploughed back into Early Years' outdoor environment.

Cohort data had been transposed to Target Tracker and 13 out of 16 pupils were expected to reach good levels of development (GLD) by the end of year. The Headteacher outlined the background to those not on track, and advised that Early Years families with special needs' children were invited to attend a free seminar in March which would focus on potential, and opportunities to support. The Head hoped to include pre-school families from the nursery, and explained that those children would spend Wednesday afternoons in class to enable the school to establish a baseline from which to begin measuring progress from September.

- **How will you reach out to other pre-school families?**

The Headteacher advised that as soon as data was made available (March 2018), the school would start reaching out to parents, and aimed to bring the children in as quickly as possible.

Sports Premium Funding

All KS1 children had a 'Movement and Mindfulness' taster session; there was a Zumba taster for KS2 (latter to be offered as a subsidized after-school club in return for use of the hall for community classes). PomPoms and Twirling was extremely popular with the children (girls and boys) and a subsidized offer was being explored. The Chair of Governors was in discussion with the local Cricket Club and it was hoped the children could be offered a taster session one afternoon before the season started. The Headteacher was exploring with the London Beach Hotel the option of golf coaching, and potential fund-raising opportunities.

The school was looking at a new Lettings Policy (see Item 11).

Collaboration

The next Tenterden Rural Alliance (TRA) training session was scheduled for 12 March and it was hoped that as many governors as possible would attend (Bethersden had been the best represented GB at the last session).

There were no further questions and governors thanked the Headteacher for his report.

GB Monitoring

Governors thanked the TD governor for preparing a monitoring schedule, and agreed to discuss at the end of the meeting.

7. **Chair's Report including Strategic Planning**

The Chair relayed her thoughts on the recent Ofsted Inspection (report awaited) and sought governors input on strategic planning (recorded in Minutes part 2).

8. **Safeguarding**

The Headteacher advised of Ofsted's focus on safeguarding, and the need to ensure the Single Central Register (SCR) was in order. Governors agreed that the GB should carry out ad hoc checks on the SCR, and would add this to their monitoring schedule. The school now had 3 trained Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), providing stronger coverage across the school.

Mrs Foley agreed to contact the Deputy Headteacher to arrange 1:1 annual safeguarding update for herself.

Health & Safety

The Health and Safety Governor have completed a Walk on 10th January, report awaited. A Health and Safety Compliance visit had taken place on 10 January and had identified some issues. The Headteacher advised that Gen2 (KCC property maintenance representative) had visited on 11 January and, following the water hygiene report, were expected back. The Headteacher had received email assures from David Adams (Area Education officer, KCC) that action would be forthcoming.

SCR Monitoring
for GB action

GF for action
Term 3

AJ for H&S
Monitoring
Report



9. Finance

9 Monthly (December 2017) Monitoring

The Chair advised that the end of year Revenue out-turn was now significantly improved and, as of December 2017, was expected to be £9,199. This was a marked difference to that reported in September, and governors reviewed the reasons for this.

- the variance for staff identified in September had significantly decreased as 4 staff had left, and only one vacancy had been filled (internally);
- a frugal approach to expenditure had resulted in significant savings. This included a 72% reduction in the outlay for water coolers (water was now filtered at source); a third saved on the telephone contract; photocopying reduced to essential items; careful management of classroom resources.
- opportunities for further streamlining and growth, including income generation (recorded in Minutes, part 2).

Governors discussed the financial securing of the school moving forward and agreed a course of action (Minutes, part 2).

The PTA Chair explored how Friends of Bethersden could support the school, and the discussed the use of 'nextdoor app' and the 'washing line request system' (to be set up for Early Years).

KCC feedback on six monthly (September) monitoring

The school and KCC had engaged, and there was ongoing collaboration between the Headteacher and Schools Financial Services' which was shared with governors.

Benchmarking

Some aspects had been referred to in Minutes (Part 2) from 6 December and 11 January. However, the Finance Governor agreed to complete a comprehensive benchmarking review as a monitoring exercise and her report would be shared at the next meeting.

Schools Financial Value Standard

The Headteacher confirmed that work on the SFVS was underway, and would reflect the results of the latest compliance audit. It would be presented for review and endorsement at the March meeting.

School Fund Bank Signatories

Former employees - Kate Harper and Carole Reaks – needed to be removed as named bank signatories of the School Fund as they were no longer connected to Bethersden School. Governors unanimously agreed that the school should seek their removal post haste.

Premises

Recorded at Item 7, under health and safety.

10. Tenterden Rural Alliance (TRA)

Governors received an update, including details of the next TRA training for governors (Item 12).

11. Policies

The Headteacher explained why the Pay and Rewards Policy was not available for review at this meeting, but should be ready in time for the March FGB. The Behaviour and Home Learning Policies had been deferred to allow time for parental consultation.

Governors unanimously agreed the following policies, which had been shared in advance of the meeting:

Health and Safety (review 1 year)

Grievance (review 2 years)

Admissions (review 1 year)

Lettings (review 1 year)

Charing and Remissions (review 3 years)

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Headteacher updated governors and explained that a GDPR officer needed to be appointed, and every member of staff as well as families with children in school, needed to read, sign and return the GDPR notice. It would issue next week, and the Staff Governor advised of contingency plans for dealing with families who might have concerns or issues accepting it. The GDPR would come into effect in May and from that point on the GB would need to communicate using secure email. The Chair of Governors had been assigned a school email address and discussions with governors would have to be managed through the school account.

Governor Services Monthly Update

The monthly bulletins for December 2017 and January 2018 had been shared with governors. The Headteacher drew governors' attention to safeguarding matters.

12. Training and Development

The Chair of Governors planned to attend the next Chair's conference, and reminded the GB of the next District Governors' briefing which she would also attend. Mrs Carysforth had attended safeguarding training.

All governors were encouraged to attend the next TRA training event scheduled for 12 March.

13. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

SB for
benchmarking

Agenda Item



14. **Confidentiality**
Governors agreed that some discussion should be treated as confidential, and recorded in minutes part 2.
15. **Meeting Dates for remainder of 2017-18** (commencing 0800 hrs):
 - Wed 14 March
 - Wed 23 May
 - Wed 11 July

Signed: Date:
Chair of Governors
Bethersden Primary School