



Minutes of the Full Governing Body (FGB) Meeting held at the School on Tuesday 16 July 2019 at 0800 hrs

Present: Mrs S Buckman (Chair); Mr S Gawthorpe (Headteacher); Mr K Brannan; Mrs S Carysforth; Mr R Clark; Mrs G Foley; Ms C Hemmings; Mrs K Kirk; Mrs J Read; Ms J Williams.

Clerk: Lynne Clemitson (KCC Clerking Service)

Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting at 0800 and welcomed Justine Williams (newly appointed) co-opted Governor. Introductions followed. The Chair handed over to the Headteacher to deliver finance monitoring training using Bethersden's quarterly (June) budget data as the subject matter. It led to a number of governor questions, noted below.

Finance Monitoring – June 2019

The Headteacher took governors through Revenue Income. He explained that I01 was based on pupil numbers at the October 2018 census, and dictated funding for 2019-20; the variance of £6,000 was in relation to top-up funding (the Local Authority had requested further evidence in support of an application put forward by the school).

Governors questioned:

- **How was income from facilities and services (I08) generated?**
The school hall was let for activities, e.g. yoga. Also some staff provided outreach to other local schools.
- **Why does the school not have any contributions to visits (I12)?**
The school had not yet calculated the cost of trips - hence no contributions at this time.
- **Why was there a significant variance under donations and voluntary funds (I13)?**
Clarus Homes (building in the village) had made a significant donation. Also, the cost centre now included monies transferred from the closure of the voluntary fund (agreed by governors in order to generate savings on audit costs).
- **Was this the Friends of Bethersden School (FoBS) fund-raising?**
No, FoBS money was entirely separate from the school.

Turning to Revenue Expenditure, the Headteacher explained that the majority of the budget (currently 74%) was allocated to teaching staff (E01), though less spend was predicted in the coming year as an expensive teacher had left and teaching hours had been reduced. However, education support staff (Teaching Assistant) costs (at E03) had increased, reflecting – for the most part - extra support in classes.

- **Why the variance on administrative and clerical staff?**
The vacant full-time office manager post (from April to September) had saved on costs; the variance also reflected the salary band for the new office manager.

The Head took the opportunity to highlight savings made at E06 (catering staff) which now reflected breakfast club income.
- **What is the significant variance at E19 (learning resources – not ICT)?**
The school had paid a deposit for Bushcraft 2020, but not yet received a contribution. The Headteacher explained that it would balance out over time.
- **What is covered under bought-in professional services?**
The Headteacher gave an overview, e.g. service level agreements (schools financial services; clerking service); support from Egerton School's office manager to cover the interregnum.

Governors noted that at this point in the year percentage spend should be around 25%, though accepted there might be exceptions (e.g. electricity was paid six-monthly). The Chair briefed governors on the Balance Control Mechanism (BCM at 12%), and the scope to move funds from Revenue to Capital for projects over £2,000. However, Capital could not be transferred to Revenue. She referred governors to the 'comments' section, which provided a one line explanation; this was completed by Schools Financial Services with whom Bethersden had a service level agreement.

Governors noted the scope for carrying forward more than the expected Revenue out-turn which stood at £56,005 at the time of quarterly monitoring (June 2019).

On Capital, the school received £5,428 per year and could roll these monies forward for up to 3 years. Two big projects were scheduled for summer (building works; new IT Server). Governors discussed a generous donation from the Peter Adams Trust which would contribute to the Wifi upgrade.

Governors were content that the June (first quarter) monitoring was in order and the Chair signed a copy to evidence scrutiny (copy filed with minutes). The meeting thanked the Headteacher who handed back to the Chair to progress with the agenda.

1. Statutory Reporting

- There were no apologies and the meeting was quorate.
- There were no business interests to declare against any item on the agenda.
- The meeting noted that Mr Brannan's DBS had been received and logged on the Single Central Register. Ms Williams' application was in hand.



2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Chair thanked Mrs Read for leading the last meeting in her absence. Minutes had been shared in advance, were taken as read, and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Governors requested that, in future, minutes show actions down the side.

At this time, Mr Brannan offered apologies, and an explanation for non-attendance at his induction training. Governors discussed the scope for systematic improvements.

3. Chair's Report

Strategic planning. The Chair raised the need for a planning meeting at the beginning of term, prior to the first full governing board meeting in September. This would provide an opportunity for governors to self-review the governing body's performance in 2018/19 and to finalise a monitoring schedule for 2019/20. There might be scope to hold this on 2 September, following annual safeguarding training in school (0900-1000) which all governors should attend. The Headteacher invited governors to stay on in the afternoon to join class teams and get a feel for the classes. Ruth Swailes (Improvement Adviser) would deliver middle leadership training on the 3rd, and this included governors.

Code of Conduct. The Chair explained that she was awaiting advice from The Education People (Tina Gimber) on the scope for annotating the Code of Conduct for governors to better suit Bethersden's needs. She hoped to have this in time for the meeting to enable decisions to be made and the Code to be finalized at the planning meeting.

Skills Matrix. This needed to be updated regularly and it was agreed the clerk would circulate the updated (2019) NGA questionnaire for governors attention.

Objective Setting. The Chair highlighted the significant strides made by the governing board following the outcome of the MAM, especially in relation to monitoring and succession planning. However, the planning meeting would look to set the governing board's objectives for 2019-20 and beyond following self-review which would also take place at that time.

Governors' Monthly Bulletin – July not available or the meeting.

Referring to the previous edition, and the reference to complaints panel hearings, governors discussed the scope for teaming up with other schools to share this responsibility. Any such arrangement would need to be formalised and included in the governing board's terms of reference and standing orders. The Chair undertook to email Associate Members to confirm their willingness to participate in panels.

The Headteacher took the opportunity to highlight some Tenterden Rural Alliance (TRA) training dates:

12 November (1800-2000 hrs) – covering data reporting, and an Ofsted section for governors.
7 May 2020 (1800-2000 hrs) - training to be booked based on skills matrix for every school within the TRA.

Governors referred to the work Mrs Kirk was undertaking with the school website designer to bring about improvements. As Mrs Foley was due to undertake a further website compliance review, it was agreed both governors would work together on the website project, ensuring everything was up to date and correct, and to consider how it could be enhanced. Governors commented positively on the Twitter account and one suggested this might be given greater profile.

4. School Plan and Summary Self-Evaluation

(a) Leadership and Management

Governors reviewed staff attendance, and noted the significant improvement in 2018-19 (reduced to a third of the previous year's rate). A governor asked if the current data for specific staff was unusual or a cause for concern. The Headteacher advised that absence was treated in accordance with the policy, and relevant steps taken to address as necessary. One of the absentees was no longer employed at Bethersden. The Headteacher confirmed that he had no current concerns.

The Headteacher shared KCC feedback on the 3 Year budget Plan. There were no issues or concerns.

Budget Monitoring for the first quarter (June) had been reviewed by all governors at the start of this meeting, as part of their finance training (see above). There had also been an initial review by the Chair and Vice Chair during a monitoring visit on 10 July (see item 5). A copy of the signed monitoring is filed with minutes.

(b) Quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The Headteacher referred to the self-evaluation, where he had graded this as 'good minus', at variance with the judgements made by the Improvement and Senior Improvement Advisers who had graded this as solidly 'good'. The Head explained he had taken a cautious approach because of the new leadership structure and changes to the Ofsted framework. The recent report from the Senior Improvement Adviser had been extremely positive and a governor suggested it would be beneficial to find ways of raising awareness with parents that teaching at Bethersden was 100% good.

(c) Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare including Health and Safety

Attendance, Punctuality and Exclusions

Governor Actions

All: Training on
2 & 3 September

All: Planning Meeting,
2 September tbc

All: Complete Skills
Questionnaire

Chair to email Associate
Members

All: TRA Training Dates
for Diary



Pupil attendance stood at 95.5%. There were 11 children with lower attendance and governors sought clarification.

- **What arrangements are in place to address lower attendance?**
The Headteacher explained that regular meetings took place with the school liaison officer, and the school wrote to parents as required. Those with unauthorised absence who had taken holiday had been fined.
- **Has this had an impact?**
There had been significantly less requests for holiday during term time, and sickness reporting had also declined.

There had been a sick bug in Rabbit Class at the end of Term 5, and an element of drop off in Year 6. Governors were also advised of the attendance of one pupil (at 37%) due to medical circumstances.

- **Do you have confidence the badge (100% attendance) incentive is working, and how it impacts on pupils with medical conditions?**
Children enjoy receiving badges. If a pupil's absence was solely related to a specific disability, this may be taken into account.

A governor expressed concern that some pupils may be disaffected especially if they had only one day off at the beginning of the year, and then no prospect to secure the award. The Head clarified that children received certificates for improved attendance.

- **Is attendance covered as part of new pupil/parent induction?**
Yes. Reception parents are given a leaflet and it is covered as part of the induction talk.

Governors went on to discuss best practice.

The Headteacher reiterated that punctuality was also a significant concern, with 23 regular 'lates' (that was before register closed); seven families arrived after 0905 hrs, and had accumulated 43 days when late. The school had spoken to the parents and written to them, and all had received communication from the school liaison officer or Early Help. It impacted on the teaching and learning, not just for them but for others. It could also be stressful for those arriving late.

Governors were advised that there had been 3 exclusions in total this year.

Wellbeing and Workload

This was a focus of the new Ofsted framework. The Staff governor was invited to comment on the situation in school and explained the differing requirements between Reception and other Key Stages which impacted. Governors noted the importance of speaking to all staff about this during monitoring, and not just assuming that it was the same for everyone. Governors asked if there was a network of staff support across the school, and were assured this was the case.

Health and Safety

A governor asked for an update on KCC's response to the perimeter fence. The Head advised that in KCC's view it was not a significant threat as the school had carried out a dynamic risk assessment (and had vigilant staff on the field daily). The school had decided to invest rather than awaiting KCC action, and it would come from the capital budget. The Headteacher awaited a quote from Four Seasons, and had approached Clarus to see if they could offer better value. There were no issues to bring to governors attention at this time.

Governors were advised that Operation Eagle Eye had been invited to speak to Bethersden parents on the issue of parking around the school.

(d) & (e) Outcomes for Children, including EYFS and GLD Outcomes

Governors reviewed the (unvalidated) data.

EYFS

Bethersden had exceeded their target, with 93.33% achieving Good Levels of Development (GLD), which was well above the national average.

- **What is the situation with the one student who did not reach GLD?**
The Headteacher explained that the pupil had joined Bethersden from another school as recently as April 2019.
- **How did disadvantaged (pupil premium) pupils fare?**
There were no disadvantaged pupils in this cohort.

The Headteacher highlighted that Bethersden had secured the highest GLD within the Tenterden Rural Alliance (TRA).



Phonics

Bethersden had outperformed national, with 88.23% pass rate: 82.5% achieved 39+; the remaining number achieved 100%. Seventy five percent of disadvantaged pupils had achieved the expected score. Again Bethersden had achieved the highest phonics screening score within the TRA.

The Headteacher briefed governors on the circumstances surrounding those who had not reached expected standard (including one child who missed out by 1 mark) and in response to governor questioning clarified that one pupil had special needs and the other had 73% attendance.

- **What effort would be going in to support those children?**

One child (who scored just below) would go into English lessons with Year 2. Another pupil would join year 1 because they required phonics teaching.

Governors asked if this data could be shared with parents and the Head confirmed that there would be an article in the September newsletter (prior to that, individual data would be shared with parents).

Key Stage 1

	Reading	Writing	Maths	Combined
Expected	75.00%	70.83%	79.20%	70.83%
Greater Depth	21.00%	12.50%	12.50%	08.33%

The Headteacher pointed out the cohort had changed since the original target were set, and five new children had joined since November (3 of whom did not meet expected). The cohort changes had also impacted on greater depth targets. Governors were given a verbal account of how Bethersden had fared compared to other TRA schools and the Headteacher clarified that the school had performed ahead of national average in all areas.

- **Would you say, across the board, there is enough going into those high achieving children?**

Next year an experienced TA would be coming out of class to work closely with the more able and the more vulnerable: four afternoons of interventions per week would be dedicated to raising the level of children achieving greater depth and to those who had not attained expected to help them catch up.

- **Why did 'homegrown' pupils not perform as well as non 'homegrown'?**

The Headteacher shared the cohort's phonics data (62.5%) and the correlation with the latest results.

Governors noted that four GRT pupils had under-performed but were being supported to catch up.

Year 4 Multiplication Check

Governors discussed the results and some expressed concern around the nature of the test which was considered to be more about ICT proficiency skills. However, there was recognition that more needed to be done to secure multiplication across all classes and the scope for using TT Rock Stars to support this. In response to governor questioning about consistency in teaching of times tables, the staff governor (maths lead) advised that this was under review, but pointed out the need for a balance of approaches. There was discussion around the need for parents to encourage children with learning of times tables.

Key Stage 2

	Reading	Writing	Maths	Combined	GPS
Expected	79.17%	79.17%	79.17%	62.50%	66.67%
Greater Depth	29.17%	20.83%	16.67%	08.33%	20.83%

Governors were pleased to note the improvement in this year's achievements, acknowledging that Bethersden was now in line with 'national' expected, up 18% on last year's maths attainment, and in the top tier within the TRA. The Headteacher paid tribute to Mr Clark and Mrs Smith for all their hard work.

- **Why is combined not representative of the results?**

The Headteacher explained that 'combined' reflected children achieving expected across all areas. One student was one mark away from 'expected' in reading – if the school challenged this result and it was successful, combined would increase by approximately 5%; there were two other pupils who were one mark away in maths for whom the school was considering challenge. This would again impact on combined if successful.

Governors noted that Bethersden was the second highest achieving within the TRA for greater depth.

- **What is the issue with GPS?**

The Headteacher advised that he had analysed the test papers and concluded that the issue was spelling, which harked back to phonics screening (58%) and 63% at the end of year 2.



The Head believed this would be a legacy issue for the next 3 years and had bought in Spelling Shed (whole school spelling scheme) to facilitate teaching and learning.

Given the issue around spelling, a governor expressed concern about spelling being marked in English books. The Headteacher referred to educational research which highlighted that this could be demotivating and detrimental and that the best way forward was to teach in context. The Headteacher outlined plans to progress spelling next year, including a non-negotiable spelling list which would be sent to parents to reinforce.

Governors noted the data for disadvantaged (pupil premium) children.

The Headteacher shared his predictions for progress scores which were expected to show a significant improvement on last year.

Governors questioned the Headteacher on data for other year groups (recorded in Minutes, part 2).

(f) Governance

Succession planning. Governors discussed a potential candidate for one of the vacant posts (1 x co-opted; 1 x authority); they agreed they would provide strong community links and that the Headteacher should make an initial approach.

Stakeholder engagement. Governor discussed the impact of recent events on the goodwill and reputation of the school and how well the children's input at 'Summer Spectacular'; church afternoon teas; and the display at the gardening society had reflected on them. They had received very positive feedback and were encouraged to be involved in VE Day commemorations next year. The Chair thanked Mrs Read (Vice Chair) in particular for her time and dedication.

Training and Development. Governor feedback reports from training undertaken had been shared in advance and included:

- **Sensory Processing** (06.06.19) – Jenn Read
Attended training session with staff, all of whom were very engaged and which included some 'lightbulb' moments in relation to some children in their classes.
- **Governors' Induction Training** (15.06.19) – Coleen Hemmings and Kate Kirk
A key issue arising from this was to understand data, especially that in relation to budgets, and hence the training at the beginning of this meeting.
- **Be Prepared and Knowledgeable of Ofsted** (20.06.19) – Jenn Read, Sally Carysforth, Coleen Hemmings and Kate Kirk
Following this training governors had met to discuss key points and will use these as part of the GB action plan for 2019-20. Monitoring and British Values were key themes.
- **Improving the Quality of Finance Monitoring** (02.07.19) – Sam Buckman, Coleen Hemmings
- **Headteacher Appraisal** (04.07.19) – Jenn Read
- **Education Inspection Framework Webinar** (08.07.19) – Coleen Hemmings, Jenn Read, Stuart Gawthorpe, Kate Kirk

Governors were invited to email (to all) with any questions or comments on the training feedback records.

The Training & Development (TD) Governor – Sally Carysforth – undertook to send round a link to 'prevent', a statutory training requirement for governors. All were requested to undertake prior to the next meeting and to provide the TD governor with their certificate for the record.

5. GB Monitoring of School Plan Priorities

The Headteacher thanked governors for their support and for being that vital critical friend. He welcomed governor input and feedback and acknowledged their significant input over recent months which was evident from the number of monitoring and interaction reports which had been shared in advance. These included:

- Outdoor Play Equipment, Areas and Supervising Staff (23.05.19)
- Role of Science within the School, and linking with Maths and English (26.06.19)

A governor asked if science would receive greater focus next year, and the Headteacher confirmed that would be the case. It would be addressed during leadership training which was planned for September Inset.

Another governor asked how the Headteacher could be sure that teaching in foundation subjects was secure. The meeting was reminded of the appointment of subject champions with lead responsibility and access to relevant organisations and societies to which the school subscribed.

HT to action

All : Undertake Prevent Training (TD Governor to provide link).



- Maintenance of Play Equipment follow-up (04.07.19)
- Strategies to promote Bethersden School and increase intake each year (04.07.19)

Governors shared thoughts around a school prospectus but given the prohibitive cost of this had settled on an A5 postcard incorporating photographs and texts which could easily be distributed and updated.

- Safeguarding all children during school hours (09.07.19)
- Buster's Book Club Award (09.07.19)
- June Finance Monitoring – Initial Feedback (10.07.19)

A governor raised the issue of follow-up actions resulting from monitoring and how these could be tracked using an online app 'Trello'.

The Chair requested that the new School Plan include a column related to governor monitoring which would reference the schedule, evidence key action points to emerge and record progress against those.

6. Safeguarding

Governors were assured that all actions had been completed as a result of a recent safeguarding incident. Two new members of staff had been added to the Single Central Register; one reference was awaited. There were no further issues to bring to governors' attention.

The Safeguarding governor confirmed that an ad hoc check of the Single Central Register would be carried out before end of term. The Head advised that the annual safeguarding review would be completed in September.

Safeguarding Governor to check SCR

Governors were reminded of the need to complete Prevent training/a refresher.

7. Policies

Governors reviewed policies and agreed the following actions:

- **Appraisal** – defer to September.
- **Finance** - Agreed, next review 1 year (governors agreed the £5,000 delegation limit for the Headteacher and noted that Mr Galthorpe and Mrs A Smith were both credit card holders. The Chair confirmed that she carried out regular checks and challenged spend, and counter-signed all credit card invoices.
- **Health & Safety** – Agreed, subject to name changes. Next review 1 year.
- **Behaviour Principles Statement** – defer to September to reflect changes in new Ofsted framework.

The Headteacher advised that the policy schedule was under review and would be presented at the next meeting.

Governors took the opportunity to discuss road safety and the Headteacher explained why no funds would be forthcoming – he had written to the LA to raise as a concern.

8. Any Other Business

The Headteacher sought volunteers to give an hour or afternoon per week to read with pupils: Mrs Hemmings put herself forward.

Mr Hemmings

Volunteer helpers were also requested for Sports Day on Thursday 18th July. Mrs Foley and Mrs Read self-nominated; Mrs Hemmings would come along if possible.

Mrs Foley/Mrs Read (?Mrs Hemmings)

9. Confidentiality

The Headteacher advised that the SATs information should be treated as confidential. The clerk suggested there was no need to record in separate minutes as these would not be made public until the SATs data was confirmed. However, it was agreed that one item of discussion in relation to pupil outcomes should be treated as confidential and recorded in minutes, part 2.

10. Meeting Dates

Governors discussed the difficulties of finding a convenient time for all and agreed that the initial meeting should be held on 25 September at 0800 hrs.

Signed:
Chair of Governors
Bethersden Primary School

Date:

