



**Bethersden Primary School**  
**Minutes of the Full Governing Body (FGB) Meeting**  
**held at the School on Thursday, 31 January 2019 at 0800 hrs**

**Present:** Mrs S Buckman (Chair); Mr S Gawthorpe (Headteacher); Mr K Brannan; Mrs S Carysforth (observing); Mr R Clark; Mrs G Foley; Mrs J Read.  
**Clerk:** Lynne Clemitson (KCC Clerking Service)

### Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting at 0810 hrs and welcomed Mr Brannan. Introductions followed.

### 1. Statutory Reporting

- There were no apologies. The meeting was quorate.
- The Chair advised of Mr Jones' resignation due to work commitments. He had however agreed to carry out health and safety monitoring twice a year, and governors unanimously endorsed his move to Associate Member (without voting rights) with immediate effect. His appointment would be for a four year term, ending 30 January 2023.
- Governors were advised that Mr Uebel had decided to stand down, with immediate effect.
- There were no business interests to declare against any item on the agenda.
- Mr Brannan signed the declaration confirming he had read and understood his responsibilities in the latest DfE guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2018). The Headteacher would retain this in school. Mr Brannan confirmed that he would commence the process for Enhanced DBS clearance (statutory timescale applies).
- Governors were briefed on the outcome of the Staff Governor election process, and endorsed Mr Robert Clark's move to that role with effect from 25 January 2019. The appointment was for a four year term (whilst Mr Clark remained an employee), ending 24 January 2023. Governors asked that the minutes reflect their gratitude to Mrs Grace, former staff governor. Her unstinting commitment and contribution to the Governing Body (GB) over the last 12 years had been exceptional, and she would be missed.
- The Headteacher updated governors on the status of the parent election process: closing date for applications was 6 February.

### 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes (part 1) had been shared in advance, were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Minutes (part 2) were tabled and, following review, were also signed by the Chair as an accurate representation. Minutes were left with the Headteacher for filing in school. There were no matters arising, and action points were dealt with under relevant agenda items.

### 3. Chair's Report

The Chair led discussion on reconstitution, covering the size of the board (i.e. number of governors required to be effective and carry out monitoring responsibilities), and the ratio of parents, staff and community representation. Governors agreed that further exploration was required, and that this should be an item of business on the next agenda, at which time the outcome of parent elections would be known. Meanwhile, governors considered the nomination of Mr Keith Brannan as Authority Governor. He was highly respected in the local community, a member of the parish council, had previous school governance experience with Bethersden, and his strong skills set across the board undoubtedly would enhance the effectiveness of the governing body. Governors unanimously commended him to the Local Authority and the clerk undertook to progress the relevant paperwork for his nomination.

Governors were informed that the Chair and Vice Chair had met to consider GB monitoring, as the current system was not working as it should. Governors agreed to stay on, following the full governors' meeting, to review the process and schedule. One of the issues was around availability; the Headteacher suggested that one of the termly staff training sessions be set aside for meetings with governors, and this was welcomed. The Chair raised the need to ensure support was in place for new and returning governors.

Governors had reviewed the monthly bulletin covering December and January, and the Chair highlighted the references to teacher wellbeing and workload. The Headteacher explained that he had set aside two staff training sessions this term to discuss workload, and had held a long discussion with staff already about marking feedback and the amount of time required for this. However, the introduction of pupil self-assessment, which the Headteacher explained, was expected to have a positive impact. It was a skill which the children would need to be taught, and would be trialed for two terms before roll-out. A governor asked how children currently evaluated their work, and learned from one another. The Headteacher and staff governor referred to existing systems – peer assessment and peer talk – which benefited pupils. The governor noted that, if those systems were working, they contributed another layer to monitoring of teaching and learning.

Turning to staff wellbeing, the Headteacher advised that one training session per term was set aside for this, and he shared actions and steps he had already taken in support of wellbeing.

Strategic planning was covered at the end of the meeting (recorded in minutes, part 2).

### 4. Headteacher's Report linked to School Plan

The report was tabled, and the Headteacher provided a verbal summary, including school finance.

#### KCC feedback on Six Monthly (September 2018) Monitoring

This had been shared with governors, who were pleased with the outcome and once again commended the Finance Officer on her thoroughness. A copy would be filed with the minutes.

#### Nine Monthly (December 2018) Monitoring and BCM (Balance Control Mechanism)

Governors had reviewed the December data and had a number of questions:



- **The financial position was looking more positive - how had savings been generated?**  
The income for FY 18-19 had been £665,683, and the expected out-turn was just under, at £665,394. The Headteacher gave an example of one of a myriad of effective financial controls which had been successfully implemented. He also reminded governors of how staff restructure and change had impacted on the budget. Further discussion recorded in minutes, part 2.
- **With regards swimming income (I12), will this be forthcoming?**  
When swimming was booked for terms 3 and 4 it was immediately logged as a financial commitment and hence showing in the budget data as a negative balance. Tracking in this way facilitated better financial planning.
- **Is there an optimum number on the school roll in terms of funding what you can do?**  
Technically, the school capacity should not exceed 140. The Headteacher set out the guaranteed funding for each child, and the additional sum per pupil premium student. The pupil premium roll was increasing, as was the challenge. When preparing the 3 year budget in 2018-19, the school had based it on a roll of 126 for each of those years. Bethersden also received a 'sparsity' premium, and the Headteacher explained why Bethersden did not score highly on the IDACI index. Additional income was also granted for special needs.

The school structure was now offering six classes (with only one mixed year group), and the Headteacher reiterated his view that income be invested in qualified teachers to achieve best outcomes for pupils.

- **Can you explain what the situation is with regards breakfast club (under E24)?**  
The Headteacher explained that, thanks to the breakfast club supervisor, some savings had been achieved through efficiency planning of the breakfast menu which now offered more healthy, and varied, options. The club was also growing in popularity (numbers between 16 – 23) and the school had sought a second member of staff to support the extended school facility, but there had been no interest (though funding had been earmarked for this). The club offered a bespoke menu during language week and that has boosted numbers.
- **How does breakfast club benefit the children?**  
For some, they receive a nutritional breakfast which they might otherwise not have. There was also a social aspect, and the club provided a 30 minute transition between home and school which helped to prepare some children for learning.

Governors were pleased to note that, on the current forecast, there would be no need to dip into the carry forward from last year, resulting in a much improved end of year out-turn of £32,215. This was well within the BCM (now increased from 8 to 12%). There were no further questions (other variances had been addressed in earlier monitoring exercises), and the Chair signed off the December budget, and BCM (copy of each to be filed with minutes).

On Capital, it was noted that the expected out-turn remained at £10,937. The Headteacher advised of plans to use this funding for school refurbishment – a whole school re-paint would be undertaken during the summer holidays. Governors were content with this proposal. They touched briefly on other funding streams to support school improvement, and governors were advised of grant applications made or in the offing for specific projects (e.g. forest school).

Before moving on, the Headteacher advised that he was preparing for budget close-down, and reviewing the 'Keeping your Balance' questionnaire in preparation for the return of Schools Financial Value Standard (deadline 31March).

#### School Context

In response to governor questioning, the Headteacher advised that the number of pupil premium children had increased from 19 to 27 (though funding for those pupils not included in the last census would not be forthcoming until April 2020). Pupil premium was used towards offering those children subsidised clubs, and support for educational trips. Governors noted the percentage of pupils with special needs, as well as the numbers with multiple vulnerabilities.

#### Things to Celebrate

Governors were delighted that 10 new parents had come along to open week, and were pleased to hear that, for some, Bethersden was their first choice having viewed other local offers. The Headteacher had invited families in to speak about home communication, and had taken away a few ideas to work on. Parents of younger children had commented positively on the accessibility of staff.

The mobile classroom refurbishment had been completed, all bar the snagging.

The reintroduction of guitar tuition had been well received, with 14 children currently taking up the offer. And governors commended the school choir for their annual performance at Halden Heights Nursing Home which had earned high praise.

The Treasure Island theatre company visit had been well received, and – as the class text – was providing a level of challenge and exposure to language not usually experienced in school.

#### Leadership and Management

The main points included:

- the reduction in capacity of the leadership team would restrict the number of things the Headteacher had hoped to undertake this year.
- Subject leadership, particularly in maths, was good.
- Staff training over the reporting period had included academic literacy; online safety, and subject leadership, and time had been set aside this term to try out those things.
- The Headteacher had been asked to deliver training on the NPQ training course next year.



#### Quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment

- The Improvement Adviser (Ruth Swailes) had commented positively on the assessment model designed in school and the Headteacher was supporting four other schools in their transition to the Bethersden assessment model which reduced the workload of teachers.
- The Highworth Maths Lead was working with the Maths subject lead (a key priority and Ofsted action point). The Chair commented that she was delighted to hear that half of the Excellence Awards being made were for progress and attainment in Maths.
- In response to governor questioning, the Headteacher advised that 'maths talk' was about children's understanding of what lay behind maths problems and having the vocabulary to explain it. In other words 'Maths talk' evidenced their understanding of maths, and built confidence. In response to further questioning, the Headteacher advised that children were beginning to understand why this mattered. The school now had to plug the gaps of those children who did not start out on this curriculum.
- 67% of year 1 children have already reached the required standard in the Phonics screening check with end of year prediction standing at 94%.
- In relation to pupil premium children, a governor asked how the school plugged the language gaps for those children. The Headteacher explained that language was put on the learning wall and unpicked at the start of every lesson; teachers then checked understanding. The home learning sheet was also used to encourage families to explore language at home.

#### Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

- Attendance stood at 95.84%, now in the third quintile.
- There had been one exclusion.
- Governors discussed an ongoing high needs funding application and how that would be used, if successful (recorded in minutes, part 2).

#### Outcomes for Pupils

- The Headteacher set out the revised process for pupil progress meetings, and the need for review of target tracker measures to provide more realistic tracking of More Able pupils.
- The percentage of Age Related Expectation was up in every area from Term 1: 9% increase in maths; 4% in writing and 4% in reading. Combined stood at 70%, higher than last year (at 61%). Further improvement was necessary, with continuity of achievement across all three areas. The Headteacher reminded governors about the impact of pupils with multiple vulnerabilities.

#### Early Years

- Focus on presenting the indoor learning environment in a better way: a priority for the Early Excellence Group, in which Bethersden participated.

The **Outcomes Report for Term 2** had been shared in advance, and the link governor had emailed the Headteacher with a number of questions which were presented at the meeting:

- **Can you explain what Education, Health and Care Plan means?**  
It is a sub-category of Special Educational Needs and Disability. It replaced the old 'Statements' for children with significant additional needs beyond the level of support the school could offer. The school currently had one pupil with an EHCP and four applications. Of those, one had been rejected, two accepted, and the fourth awaited a judgement.
- **Can the data be split to distinguish between higher level achieving pupils – a focus of Ofsted was for us to provide greater challenge for our higher achieving pupils?**  
The Headteacher explained the existing issue around tracking higher ability pupils which was currently being worked on.  
  
In response, the link governor asked that the data be shared, once the issue with target tracker had been rectified. The Headteacher explained that, at this point in the year, children could be very strong in one area, which could give a distorted picture. He advised that five headteachers were currently working together to review the thresholds and boundaries.
- **Why is it that pupil premium children are significantly lower than their peers, and what plans are in place to diminish the difference, with 53.8% below expectation?**  
Language was a factor for many from disadvantaged backgrounds. A Pupil Premium review was scheduled for 5 March (with a senior improvement adviser/pupil premium champion from Sussex), and would produce an action plan to raise attainment for those children.
- **When comparing Term 1 and 2 data, at least 2 pupil premium children have progressed from 'below' to 'on track' in maths. How was this achieved and could similar strategies be applied with others, and across the other subjects?**  
The Headteacher confirmed that progress was as a result of quality first teaching. Also, the first term had been spent embedding learning from the previous year, with the knock on impact of demonstrable greater progress in Term 2.
- **In relation to SEND (special educational needs and disability) pupils, outcomes between Terms 1 and 2 had not changed: was an improvement expected on the 81.3% currently below expectation?**  
The Headteacher advised that he would expect to see an increase. He had added six pupils to the SEN register, all of whom had been referred to LIFT, and had involvement from the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service. He provided a status update on where matters stood. He confirmed that those pupils were being tracked using provision maps.
- **As strategies for engaging boys in reading and writing have as yet had no impact, do you have other strategies to accelerate their reading and writing, in the same way that their maths' progress and attainment has improved?**  
More work around non-fiction texts was planned, covering science and the wider curriculum, with more research-based learning.
- **Why has progress of one of the girls dropped in reading and writing, and what has been done to address this?**  
The Headteacher clarified that this was due to exceptionally low attendance, and provided detail.



- **In Year 6, are the level of outcomes for end of year realistic, as there was no movement between Terms 1 and 2?**  
There was lots of reaffirmation taking place in class, and plugging of gaps (historical). Whilst a lot of progress had been made in that class, because of the nature of it, it was not showing in data. A specialist teacher from Highworth was working with ‘cusp’ children on Maths. This had been very successful and she was now going to provide support to another group.
- **What was being done to improve boys’ and SEN pupils’ level of progress in Year 6?**  
The Headteacher advised that new joiners had impacted on that data. There was a high level of mobility at Bethersden and children came with gaps in their learning. He reiterated the impact of multiple vulnerabilities.  
  
In response, and in relation to a particular case study, a governor challenged the feasibility of the child being taught successfully within the classroom. The Headteacher explained that the same curriculum was taught, and differentiation was used to accommodate the pupil. It was not necessarily beneficial to move a pupil to a different class.
- **With no change in outcomes for Year 5, and with 43.8% below age related expectations, was there time to improve before the end of Year 6? And what steps were being taken to improve children’s outcomes?**  
There were plans in place to support the whole class. Data was under moderation as part of the improvement plan for that class.
- **Is the data for Year 4 Otter children reliable? If so, and they are all meeting expectations, are they being collectively challenged to achieve ‘exceeding’?**  
The Headteacher explained that he was being joined by another Headteacher that morning to moderate the children’s books.
- **Why is progress ‘below’ across all Year 4s, and what is in place to plug the gap?**  
The Headteacher set out the current position (recorded in minutes, part 2).
- **One of three Year 4 pupils in Deer class has dropped below expected since last term – what was being doing about this?**  
The Head explained that one pupil had not been in school for a significant period of time which had created gaps in learning. He set out the exceptional circumstances and significant need in this particular instance and actions to support this.
- **What is being done to improve Writing in Year 3?**  
Governors were informed that outcomes were better than reflected in this ‘cautious’ data, and he explained why a ‘cautious’ approach had been adopted.
- **Pupil progress was really good in Year 3: can anything more be done to improve outcomes for special needs pupils?**  
Four new additional Special Needs had impacted on the data, which was why their progress appeared low.
- **In Year 2, six pupils ‘below expected’ in Term 1 were now meeting ‘expected’ in Maths – how was this achieved and why was it not reflected in progress data?**  
The focus group were now on track thanks to interventions and the rest of the class were making ‘expected’ or just below expected progress.
- **What was being done to accelerate Pupil Premium children’s progress in Year 2?**  
The Headteacher provided context, and spoke of referrals or support in place for a number of pupils, including teaching and learning interventions in school. Role models were being provided in school, and governors discussed the need for parental engagement. The Headteacher briefed governors on the latter, and the need for follow-through at home.
- **With progress and attainment at exceptionally high levels in Year 1, how has this been achieved and can any strategies be rolled out to other year groups?**  
The Headteacher reminded governors that pupils had benefited from excellent phonics teaching from day one (apart from one child who had joined in September). This provided a quality foundation for pupils moving forward.
- **In Early Years, how were pupils ‘below’ being supported to achieve ‘expected’?**  
The Headteacher explained that there was no formal tracking, and it was monitored against an end-of-year set of expectations. As children developed at different stages, it was not unusual for children not to display at this time. He believed data for Early years was unreliable, and advised that all but one were expected to achieve good levels of development (GLD) this year. Appropriate referrals and support had been put in place for the pupil not expected to achieve GLD.

The link governor commented positively on the improvement in attendance of pupil premium and GRT children.

#### Governance

Governors discussed training opportunities and agreed to pursue:

- Safeguarding on 27 February – link governor (GF) to attend
- Understanding Primary Data, 6 March – the Headteacher advised this would focus on historic data
- Governors’ role in Exclusions and Discipline – GB representation recommended – governors to consider
- New Governor Induction on 13 March – SC to reserve 3 places for GB
- Understanding Governor responsibility in SEN on 21 March – governors to consider.

The training schedule would be shared with governors who should advise SC if they wished to attend an event. It was noted that it had not been possible for GB representation at the 4 January ‘online safety’ briefing provided by KCC.

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



## 5. Safeguarding

Other than matters discussed at Item 4 above, the Headteacher had no issues to bring to governors' attention.

## Health & Safety

Governors were advised that the Headteacher had managed to obtain a much more reasonable quote for tree surgery (less than 3 times the original quote) and this would be carried out by the end of February half term at the latest.

A governor raised the issue of the boundary with the new residential housing development, and future access to carparking and potentially forest school. This would require consideration and it was suggested that the Headteacher invite the developer in to discuss.

## 6. Policies and Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

Policies had been shared in advance and governors unanimously agreed:

- Lettings (annual review)
- Governor Expenses (review 3 years)
- Pay (annual review) subject to the following amendment:
  - that any discretionary payment of up to £250.00 would always be with the prior agreement of the governing body.

The most current Asset Register was presented to governors who were pleased to note that it was in good order and up-to-date (as of 7 January 2019). There were no requests to write-off any equipment at this time. The Banking Mandate had also been circulated, and governors noted the current signatories: Mr Gawthorpe (Headteacher); Sophie Beale, Samantha Green; Amanda Thomas.

Governors discussed the Business Continuity Plan and the need for contingency planning to cover Brexit. They confirmed they were content with the proposals outlined by the Headteacher.

## 7. Any Other Urgent Business

Time was devoted to strategic planning (recorded in minutes, part 2).

## 8. Confidentiality

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

Before closure, governors discussed meeting dates for the remainder of the academic year. They concluded that these should be reviewed following the outcome of parent elections in order to take account of the views of new governors. Meanwhile, all agreed that the next meeting would take place in school at 0800 hrs on **Thursday 14 March 2019**.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Chair of Governors

Bethersden Primary School