



Minutes of the Full Governing Body (FGB) Meeting held at the School on Wednesday 25 September 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)

1. Statutory Reporting

- There were no apologies and the meeting was quorate.
- Governors completed and signed their Business and Pecuniary Interest Declarations. The Vice Chair declared an interest at Item 6; no other governor had any interest to declare against any item on the agenda.
- Governors signed a declaration to confirm they had read and understood their responsibilities under the updated DfE Guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education (2 September 2019).
- The Headteacher advised that Mrs J Williams' DBS had been received and logged on the Single Central Register.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes had been shared in advance, were taken as read, and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3. Chair's Report

The Chair thanked governors for attending an informal planning meeting earlier in the month and, for the record, relayed the outcomes.

Governing Body (GB) Self-Evaluation. The GB had continued to scrutinize its priorities and actions following on from the MAM report (February 2019). A comprehensive monitoring programme was in place linked to School Plan priorities and governors were proactive in any follow-up. Feedback from training was shared verbally and through written reports. A skills audit had been completed (see below). Governors agreed that it would be beneficial to complete a full self-evaluation one year on from the MAM (February 2020) using the 20 Questions prepared by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Education Governance and Leadership.

GB Attendance. The record for 2018-19 was positive and gave rise to no concerns. The Headteacher would update the school website.

Skills Audit. Governors shared thinking on the latest audit (September 2019). In terms of knowledge of education policy, governors accessed the monthly update prepared by The Education People and had representation at district briefings; links with the community continued to strengthen through school involvement with local events and GB representation; the Finance monitoring pair (Chair and Vice Chair) had extensive experience in this regard and the GB had recently received bespoke training on the school's budget. The audit provided a benchmark for future training and recruitment needs.

Effectiveness of Governance Structure. Governors agreed the existing circle model worked well, supported by a robust monitoring and visits programme. There was unanimous agreement to continue with this.

Terms of Reference and Delegation Planner. A governor questioned the GB's role in determining extra-curriculum provision and was advised that this was in relation to wrap-around care (e.g. breakfast and after-school clubs). There was unanimous agreement that the wording be changed to reflect this. Governors also agreed that a Standing Order on Virtual Governance should be included in their Terms of Reference. Subject to these changes, Governors unanimously endorsed.

Governors' Responsibilities and Link roles. These were agreed:

Role/Responsibility	Link Governor(s)	Supported by
Special Educational Needs & Disability	Mrs Read	Mrs C Hemmings & Mrs G Foley
Child Protection & Safeguarding	Mrs S Carysforth & Mrs C Hemmings	
Health & Safety	Mr K Brannan	
Finance	Mrs S Buckman & Mrs J Read	
Training & Development	Mrs S Carysforth	
Pupil Premium/Disadvantaged	Mrs S Buckman & Mrs K Kirk	
Early Years	Mrs Buckman	
Reading	Mrs J Williams & Mrs K Kirk	
School Website	Mrs K Kirk	
School Promotion & Public Relations	Mr K Brannan	

Membership of the Headteacher's Performance Management and Pay Panel. Composition was agreed as Mr K Brannan, Mrs G Foley and Mrs J Read, supported by Mrs Ruth Swailes (external adviser).

Governor Actions

GB Self Evaluation Feb 2020

HT to update website



Succession Planning. Governors reviewed current vacancies and the Headteacher advised of a potential candidate for the vacant co-opted role who had experience of special needs; governors agreed that the Head should pursue in slower time. With regards potential candidates for Authority consideration, governors agreed that Mrs K Kirk should be nominated.

HT to pursue

Mrs Kirk for paperwork

Arrangements for Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair. Mrs Buckman confirmed that she would step down as Chair at the end of the calendar year and governors agreed that elections for the Chair and Vice Chair posts should be held at the next meeting.

Agenda Item. Clerk to issue nomination forms.

Code of Conduct. The updated Code (prepared by The Education People) had been shared, was unanimously accepted, and signed by governors.

4. School Development

Inset (Term 1).

For the benefit of those not able to attend, the Headteacher provided an overview. He thanked governors for participating on Day 1, and asked that the record show annual safeguarding training for staff and all governors had taken place at that time. The Headteacher apologised to those governors who were unable to access the building on Inset Day 2. Feedback from Ruth Swailes' subject leadership role training on that day had subsequently been disseminated to governors. The Head advised that curriculum statements for all subjects were now available on the website.

In response to governor questioning, the Headteacher confirmed that it had been beneficial to hold the Inset team event before the start of term, enabling new and existing staff to connect and share thinking. He reconfirmed that the existing leadership structure (2 Senior Teachers rather than a Deputy) had proved successful and would continue, with delegation to middle leaders. Capacity had increased with 2 full non-contact day for different leaders with different responsibilities.

A governor commented on the positive impact for pupils (especially the new children) of having a shorter week on first return to school. The Headteacher advised that the school was likely to adopt a similar schedule next year.

School Plan

The Plan had been shared in advance and had been scrutinized by governors, who raised concerns.

- **The focus on more able pupils is limited – should they be given greater emphasis?**

The Headteacher explained that 'more able' fell within the 'vulnerable' group and every teacher had a target for higher attainment as part of their performance management. The aim was to convert those on the threshold to greater depth and this was a milestone within the plan.

A governor challenged the Headteacher, reiterating the need to back this up and make explicit. It was agreed that the wording within the Plan would be amended to include high achievers.

HT for action

The Headteacher took the opportunity to highlight targets for Greater Depth in 2020 (e.g. 37% at KS1). He reassured governors that interventions were taking place – writing techniques were a current focus. He reminded governors that this was a working document which would evolve over time and sought endorsement for the current Plan priorities and targets. Having had time to consider the document, governors unanimously approved.

Governor Objectives and Monitoring

These had been discussed at the governors' informal meeting, and some initial monitoring had already been planned/taken place. Governors would hold a further informal meeting to agree the way forward, including a full monitoring schedule which would be incorporated in the Plan.

All GB to action

A governor asked if, in future, it would be possible to have the Plan earlier (in July), giving more time to consider GB input. The Headteacher explained why this would be extremely difficult as the new priorities reflected outcomes from the previous year and time was needed over summer to process the data.

Governor Monitoring Reports had been shared in advance and were taken as read:

- School Website Policies (11.09.19) – see item 8 below.
- Bethersden Community Website (13.09.19).

5. Safeguarding

A check on the Single Central Register had been carried out by governors in Term 6 (see monitoring report of 16 July 19) and there were no questions. The Headteacher confirmed that DBSs for all staff and governors were now logged. Three full-time members of the safeguarding team had updated their training; a fourth full-time member of staff would join then when they had completed their training in October. All members of the safeguarding team received supervision from an external adviser.

Whilst all governors had completed their annual safeguarding updated at the September Inset, all bar one had completed the 'Prevent' refresher online, and agreed to pursue.

KB for Prevent

The Link governor would complete a safeguarding audit on 25 September.

SC for audit 25/9



Governors were invited to take advantage of the school photographer's visit on 7 and 8 October in order for up-to-date lanyards to be issued.

All GB – photographs 7 & 8 Oct

Health & Safety

Governors were informed that the third quote (from Jackson Fencing) for work to the boundary fence was awaited (quotes from Four Seasons and Clarus Homes were already in). In response to governor questioning the Headteacher advised that the works did not include a provision for accessing the adjacent field.

Governors questioned:

- **What was the status with the flooring and play equipment?**

The Headteacher explained that companies approached had not been prepared to quote for a small area of matting, and so quotes had been sought for the whole area. Early indications were that the cost would be prohibitive and the Headteacher was therefore looking at alternatives. An apparatus safety audit was due in September and he would seek recommendations from them.

The annual tree survey had given rise to 3 issues which the Headteacher relayed to governors and confirmed all had been addressed.

- **What was happening with the wood pile?**

Governors were advised it was part of a project being undertaken by a volunteer, and the wood was all stacked safely. Governors were assured that the project would progress and accepted that this was not a health and safety issue.

Governors discussed the maintenance of the hedge alongside the footpath. The Headteacher confirmed that it had been cut back hard 2 years ago which had exposed some gaps and subsequently was being allowed to thicken up. Governors discussed the restriction on cutting hedges/trees during nesting season. The Chair suggested it might be worth considering a fence inside the school boundary to allow the hedge to be cut back further to facilitate access to the footpath. The Head pointed out that whilst the hedge was on the school boundary, it was a Highways issue rather than for the school.

6. Finance & Premises

Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

Governors agreed to review the updated Assessment Form and to table at the next meeting. They noted the need for 6 budget reports per year to be received by Governors.

Agenda Item: SFVS form GB to action

Budget Report (1 of 6)

Data for end-August had been shared in advance. Governors noted that the Revenue carry forward had decreased over the last two months, and the out-turn was now expected to be £44,155. **Governors challenged the Headteacher about the variances** and he explained why this was the case:

- pupil numbers were lower than forecast and the roll now stood at 115 (25 leavers and 9 into reception, plus 2 children had moved to more local schools). Another child was expected to join prior to the Census;
- KCC had recommended an uplift of 2.75% to teachers' pay (more than anticipated) and this had now been factored into the data;
- overspend on education support staff was due to a new TA contract (agreed by governors as part of the new structure); payments for office support/overtime during June – August (to cover office manager vacancy);
- high needs funding awarded by KCC was less than anticipated (KCC agreed this was an error); some funding stopped earlier than expected.

Governors thanked the Headteacher for this clarification and had no further issues to raise. They noted the Capital outturn stood at £3,295.00.

The Link Governors would complete six monthly monitoring and the September budget report (2 of 6) and their monitoring would be presented at the next meeting.

Voluntary Fund Audit

The Audit report from 2018-19 was shared with governors. Governors noted that the Chair should sign Section 6 after the accounts had been audited. There were no other recommendations.

Chair for action

Premises

The Vice Chair stepped out for this item of business. The Headteacher shared details of the three quotes received for office provision: Habitat H2O Ltd - £8500; PD Builders and Sons - £10500; Hopkins Builders - £9750. Having reviewed the quotes, they were all based on the same remit with no significant differences in material quality. On that basis the Headteacher recommended the best value quote of £8,500 from Habitat H2O Ltd, and governors unanimously agreed.

Governors were briefed on the ICT project. The Headteacher explained the changes necessary to update the network (over and above the original plan) which was partly funded by a generous grant from the Peter Adams Trust and Friends of Bethersden School had also now been approached to support. The school was hoping to roll out 30 new



tablets across the school.

7. Policies

Governors thanked Mrs Kirk for supporting the Headteacher with policies. Governors reviewed and unanimously agreed the following actions:

- **Appraisal** – was part of Pay and Rewards and was not a separate policy. Delete from the list.
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability** - Defer, pending update from KCC.
- **Behaviour Principles** – agreed. Next review 2 years.
- **Supporting pupils with Medical Conditions** – Bethersden had taken the decision to administer medication and the policy and medical consent forms had been updated. Parents were able to download the consent form from the school website. Governors agreed – next review 2 years.
- **Staff Discipline** – agreed, next review 2 years
- **Freedom of Information** – in response to governor questioning, the Head advised that they had received requests in the past and the policy had proved effective in dealing with them. On this basis governors were content to agree. Next review 3 years.

Policy Review Timetable

The Headteacher advised that an updated statutory policy list had been issued and the school's policy schedule was being updated to reflect this. It would be presented at the next FGB meeting.

Agenda Item

8. School Website

Governors commented positively on the updating of the school website and the link governor advised of progress made on updating and publishing policies. Governors were invited to prepare/update their pen-pictures, and other governance information would be updated in line with statutory reporting requirements. The plan was to enhance the website with photographic images from school events. Governors also discussed the scope for local collaboration in promoting events on school and organisational websites: community collaboration was moving forward.

GB for pen pictures

On behalf of the GB and the school, the Chair thanked the link governor for her commitment to improving the website which was effectively the school's shop window.

9. Training & Development

The Training & Development (TD) Governor advised of upcoming events and it was agreed that the GB would have representation at the following events:

District Briefing (3 October) - Mrs Read, Mrs Hemmings and Mr Brannan
Wellbeing and Mental Health – Mrs Carysforth

JR & SC for training

The TD Governor advised that she was preparing a welcome pack to share with new governors as part of their induction. It was suggested that this include the Handbook for governors.

Governors discussed the suggestion of an 'Ofsted grab-bag' and the Chair agreed to support the TD governor in its preparation.

SB/SC for action

It was agreed that governors should review their skills questionnaires and provide the link governor with a list of their training requirements. In response to the clerk's request, all governors agreed that their completed questionnaires should be forwarded to the TD governor for the record.

GB/Clerk for action

10. Any Other Business

Guidance for Schools on Leaving the EU

Lord Agnew's letter of 17 September had been shared with governors. They noted that the school had a Brexit policy in place.

Governors' Monthly Updates

Hyperlinks to the July and September bulletins had been shared with governors who undertook to review.

GB to review

School Promotion and Public Relations

Governors discussed the need to address this especially in light of the (albeit exceptional) school roll this year. There was acceptance of the need to further raise the school's profile and to develop and extend links (e.g. with alumni, putting the school forward for awards (e.g. teacher of the year)). There was acknowledgement that this was already happening (3 big events had received positive feedback from within the community), and governors supported the idea of a link governor to lead on this. Mr Brannan volunteered to take this forward.

Parliamentary Review of Education

Governors were delighted to learn that Bethersden had been selected to contribute to this review next year. They were one of only a dozen schools chosen each year, selected because of their success in raising standards.

School Data: 2019 Outcomes Report

The Headteacher tabled this report and highlighted the significant progress made. He commended the Year 6 team for their efforts last year in turning around the progress scores, and the significant in-roads made to diminish the gap. Governors reinforced this and confirmed they were content for the data to be published on the school



website.

The Staff Governor took the opportunity to brief governors on 'Maths Hub', a national project to raise attainment in mathematics. It would require a cultural shift and offered a long-term whole school strategy to develop and spread excellent practice and teaching for mastery for the benefit of pupils. It would launch in the new year.

Forest School- agenda item at next meeting. The H&S Link Governor agreed to undertake a space audit.

School Access for Governors

In light of recent difficulties experienced by some governors outside usual school hours, the Headteacher was asked if he could provide governors with the gate code. The Head expressed reservations, especially in relation to the school's safeguarding responsibilities. A governor challenged this robustly. They made the point that governors held Enhanced DBS clearances and visits would be pre-arranged/by invitation only. It would, for example, enable governors to access the building and set up in anticipation of their 0800 FGB meetings (before the front office was open). Current practice did not facilitate this: governors were left outside until the office opened and had no time to prepare.

In light of the above, the Headteacher undertook to consult with the safeguarding team and with local schools to establish best practice and report back to governors.

11. Confidentiality

Governors agreed there were no issues of a confidential nature.

12. Meeting Dates

Meetings would continue to take place in school at 0800 hrs and dates were reconfirmed:

- Wednesday 27 November
- Wednesday 29 January
- Wednesday 25 March
- Wednesday 20 May
- Wednesday 15 July

Agenda Item, KB for space audit.

HT for follow-up

Signed:
Chair of Governors
Bethersden Primary School

Date: