Minutes of the meeting of the

**Full Governing Body of Milverton Primary School**

Held on 15th October 2020

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|  | Present Catherine Robbins (**CR**)Matt Fisher (**MF**)Danielle Belmega (**DB**)Laura Nicol (**LN**)Tracey Brand (**TB**)Hannah Stephenson (**HS**)Margaret Wagstaff (**MW**)Anne-Claire Bennion (**AB**)Marianne Talbot (**MT**)Colin Baran (**CB**)Farzana Meru (**FM**)Clare McNicolas (**CMcN**)Zoe Morrissey (**ZM**)Liz Kay (**LK**)In attendance:Helen Stares (**C**)  | Co-opted Governor, Chair of FGBHead TeacherDeputy Head TeacherTeacherTeacherGovernorGovernorGovernorGovernorGovernorTeacherGovernorGovernorGovernorClerk to the Governors |

**1 - Welcome and apologies**

Apologies were received from Jo Mainwaring.

The chair welcomed four new governors to the FGB meeting:

* Marianne Talbot (co-opted at the end of last term), who has been a MPS governor before and has returned
* Anne-Claire Bennion (parent governor)
* Colin Baran and Chuck Eribenne (both co-opted governors)

At the same time, a number of people are stepping down: Jo Mainwaring, who has been an active member of the finance, premises, performance management and pay committees and who also worked very hard to get WAM set up. Nigel Perry has also stepped down from the committee. He was a strong contributor in terms of financial management and risk assessments for Covid-19. Lis Blair has also stood down from the governing body and will be thanked properly at the next meeting.

**2 - Administration**

Declarations of interest: none received.

Minutes of last meeting: no matters arising, minutes approved.

Action log: three carried over items:

* Learning walks (Head Teacher) - these remain on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions
* Governor training - information about training courses for all governors to attend is available and governors are encouraged to sign up
* Attendance log - attendance has been excellent, especially given that many governors do a lot of work outside meetings

Correspondence: a lot of correspondence has been received since July: letters from parents related to school closure in September and parents raising anxieties around this time. Lots of work has been done to address these.

There have been two editions of Governance Matters, with a reminder that in spite of Covid-19, the normal business of governing must continue.

A letter about Head Teacher pay was received on the 28th September.

A letter was received regarding a safe-guarding matter, which has been satisfactorily dealt with.

A letter was received from the Local Authority school funding department about de-delegation, with a consultation to finish by the 13th November.

**3 - Elections**

Chair of Governors: Zoe Morrissey was unanimously elected

Vice Chair of Governors: Catherine Robbins was unanimously elected

Performance and Standards: Hannah Stephenson will chair this, with Maggie Wagstaff taking it on once Hannah steps down in February.

Premises: Catherine Robbins will be the chair of this committee.

Finance and Personnel: Clare McNicholas will continue to chair this committee.

Training Governor and Pupil Premium: Marianne has agreed to take on these roles.

Link Governors: Farzana Meru will take on Science, Chuck Eribenne will take on PE and sports, Colin Baran will pick up computing. Helen Love will shadow Hannah Stephenson as the safe-guarding governor, ready to take it on in February, and she will also take on PHSE and RE.

Clerk to the Governors: Helen Stares was appointed

*Action: Clerk to upload the Governor Responsibility spreadsheet to the Governor Area, plus links to where to find these items*

**4 - Annual reviews**

Committee terms of reference

These have been reviewed in P&S and F&P, but still an outstanding issue for the next premises committee meeting.

Instrument of government

This was reviewed

Meeting dates

The calendar has been uploaded to the governor area and dates will also be put in calendars on Outlook.

Declarations of interest

This document will be circulated for Governors to complete.

Governor feedback to parents

There was a discussion on how to engage with parents on a regular basis to show the presence of governors and demonstrate their responsibilities. Previous discussions have included attendance at Learning Review Meetings, introductory meetings for Reception class and lanyards to increase visibility in the playground. Given the prevailing circumstances, none of these are workable, but governors can point parents in the direction of meeting minutes, etc. News about the governors will be included on the newsfeed on the new communication app. The parent forums have not been very well attended, but this may improve in a virtual setting. New governors have been asked to send in a paragraph about themselves along with a photo.

*19:40 Helen Love joined the online meeting*

Access to Governor Space

The password will be changed in line with the Clerk’s guidance.

*Actions: Premises committee to review Terms of Reference, Clerk to ensure that the meeting dates are uploaded and to invite Committees to meetings via Outlook Calendar. Clerk to send out DoI forms for all governors to complete.*

**5 - Governor Policies**

Every member of the FGB declared that they had read the Governor Code of Conduct and were reminded that confidentiality is enduring - i.e. goes on beyond termination of the governor role. It was an opportunity to ensure governors were clear between the operational function of the school, run by the Head Teacher and School Leadership Team and governing: holding to account, challenging, supporting, etc.

Another reminder was for the Joint Hearing Panels: Milverton Governors are signed up to the cluster of local schools to provide governors if needed to sit on an appeal panel, complaints, etc. This is a reciprocal arrangement.

**6 - Safeguarding Update – Hannah Stephenson**

There are three key areas of the annual report: statutory expectations, audit actions and termly updates. School policies will be signed off as part of the next P&S committee meeting. “Keeping Children Safe In Education” document: governors are to read part one and sign a declaration that they have read it. The main changes in this are related to Covid-19, and teachers ensuring that children are safe at home.

The DBS checks log has been reviewed by the School Business Manager. The Designated Safeguarding Leads (Matt, Danielle, Laura, Amanda) attend training on a 3-yearly basis. Internal reporting systems in place for children where there are concerns - the school is responsible for following up with Social Services.

The 2019 audit had no actions to complete; 2020 - no longer an audit required, but MF and LN are going to do a review of the previous audit format. Inset day in November when all staff will go through safeguarding, and Amanda Parkes will go through this with anyone who misses it. Governors can attend this training if required. Current children of concern have been discussed and safeguarding concerns which have come to light recently.

*Action: MF to circulate date of inset day in late November, along with times for safeguarding and health & safety training. Governors to mail MF to declare their intention to attend.*

**7 - Committee Reports**

Premises

The Head Teacher covered this for JM. A lot of work has been completed: the playground, roof, West Hall floor, and the dining room has been re-pinned and decorated. Covid-19 has meant an increase in cleaning hours and therefore costs, and there have been additional pressures on staff, who have volunteered to do extra cleaning.

The next step in the redevelopment of the grounds is that the FOMPS are raising money for playground equipment for KS1, the aim being for it to be completed by the end of the academic year. No further questions.

Performance and Standards

The main focus has been on the full return to school post Covid-19. It has been very positive within all phases, children returned well and happy. There have been some changes made along the way, e.g. the dining hall system, parents being asked to wear face masks.

Attendance was initially very high, but then impacted by the Y5/6 closure. Teaching and learning has been changed out of necessity - e.g. front-facing desks. Social distancing is easier for older children to abide by. Maths and writing assessments are being undertaken to ascertain gaps in learning.

There is no data for assessments, as these were last done in March. New teachers are getting to know the children and will assess learning gaps for the parents’ evenings in November.

A remote learning plan is being put into place for when and if bubbles are closed or full lockdown happens again.

There are no major concerts with regards to mental health; a couple of staff members have raised anxieties.

Policy reviews will receive final approval in the second P&S meeting of the year.

SEND report: staffing is in place to support SEND children/EHCPs, with remote support. These children could have more of a gap in learning due to lockdown.

SDP/SEF - unable to review at end of 2019/20 academic year and any actions not completed moved to 2020/21 SDP. Plan for governor monitoring in January 2021.

Finance and Personnel

School has incurred Covid-19-related costs - cleaning, learning resources to go home. The school has applied for some funding from the LA but no news on this yet. Income has also come down, with WAM finances are not as strong as they would normally be. However, now we’re closer to normality it’s looking better. The School Business Manager is not expecting a profit from WAM this year, and it is still carrying a deficit from previous years, good vs budget for this year, but Covid-19 has had a marked impact.

Pupil Premium funding - no data to assess the impact of this is available. A large proportion of the funding goes to 1:1 support. A review of the spending will be on the school website.

Staffing - two NQTs have started, all staff have returned to school, with one member on long-term sick and due to go on maternity leave at the end of the year. Insurance is in place to cover these costs.

The Pay committee has met with a third-party to review the Head Teacher, and staff pay has been discussed for those teachers moving up the scale or who have met their objectives. Recommendations on pay have been agreed.

Chairs’ Committee

There has been an assessment of where the school is at the start of the year, along with a review of plans for the return to school and remote learning. The financial situation has also been reviewed. There have been significant premises developments over the summer. Governance issues for the School Development Plan - the school is committed to last year’s plan, and has finalised the plan for this year. The chairs have also been involved in succession planning for the governing body.

**8 - Covid-19 update – Matt Fisher**

There has been lots going on outside normal practice and it was reviewed in an SLT meeting.

The letter regarding bubble group sizes has been read by all. The current position is to have bubbles as phases. It was discussed again as an SLT this week and the position is not going to change, as taking bubble sizes down would put too many restrictions in place. However, if there are lots of cases in school in future, this would be reviewed again.

Once the letter was sent, supportive correspondence was received from parents, but prior to this there were complaints from parents whose children had been sent home. The Head Teacher asked for support to continue with the current system, and this was unanimously given. Governors supported the notion of reviewing it again if there are lots of cases and also asked about the plan if change were necessary. The Head Teacher explained this would be a class-size bubble, but this would be challenging - maths and phonics groups would have to change, hot dinners would not be available, there would have to be shared toilet space as the premises would not allow for no mixing there.

Over summer 2020 school was told that c. £26k would be put in place for catch-up funding. The SLT predicted and found that writing was the area which had suffered the most, as parents know less about what is expected, found it difficult to motivate here and to give children feedback on their writing. By contrast, parents are comfortable with reading and for maths it is clear to see if the child is right or wrong.

The focus on writing will be for the year groups affected the most by the closure, currently years 3, 4, 5 and 6, and the plan is to shrink group sizes for English lessons and use the bulk of the funding there. The SLT have reviewed pros and cons of how to spend the money, and feel that it is something to continue into next half term and review again at Christmas.

The Head Teacher has received two e-mails from parents who disagree with how the money is being spent. A staff member commented that the benefits of small groups are huge compared with the normal class sizes, meaning much faster progression. The governors were happy that the benefits to using the money in this way are outweighing the downsides. The Head Teacher accepts that the perfect solution doesn’t exist and it will be under regular review.

A governor queried about having a mix of teachers running this and the Head Teacher responded that job shares work well, with clear hand-overs between the partners, and the children respond well to different people. Another governor asked if smaller groups might continue in future, and the Head Teacher responded that the younger half of the phases don’t get exposed to what the older children are doing, but it is a good way to help the high achievers.

A governor asked if any of the funding will be used for pastoral care - to help children rebuild relationships, social skills, etc? The Head Teacher responded that returning to as normal as much as possible - e.g. the bubbles as a phase group, dining hall, playtimes etc was very beneficial here, and that the larger bubble size was crucial to this.

A governor commended the Head Teacher on making the correct prediction on where the catch-up was needed the most. The Head Teacher was also asked what has been reduced to make way for extra time on writing, to which he responded that a reshuffle of the school day was helping here, for example, without assemblies, a lot of time was being saved by not having to get children into the hall. Some small changes have been made which have a bigger cumulative effect.

The Head Teacher said he did not want to abandon parts of the wider curriculum to make way for catch-up as this is what makes school exciting and draws out different strengths in the children. Another governor congratulated MPS for prioritising wellbeing rather than formal testing, as other schools have done.

The Head Teacher asked if governors approve of the way catch-up money is being spent and this was met with unanimous approval.

Governors were satisfied that the remote learning system made sense, having logged into it. A parent governor had experience of the live learning during the Y5/6 closure and this worked well (echoed by another governor) and commented that everything was moved online very quickly, with work set and teachers being made available.

A governor raised the issue of inclusion for children who don’t have access to the range of facilities. The Head Teacher responded that doing Parents’ Evening online is an opportunity to test the system, likewise the homework set on the Seesaw system. They are looking at whether it is possible to loan computers to affected families. Insurance won’t permit this directly, so they are looking into alternatives, e.g. donations of old laptops, purchasing some laptops to send out. An alternative is to get paper activities out to families - it is only a few families per phase group.

A governor asked if the system had already been tested during Y5/6 closure and was told that some children had fallen into this gap, and didn’t complete work to the same level as other children. It remains a challenge, but if it’s a fortnight closure then it won’t have the same level of impact as the national lockdown which went on for several weeks.

A governor asked if all families have broadband and the Head Teacher explained that this is why homelearning and parents’ evening is being done online - to give an indicator. Alastair Geddes is the lead on the project looking at access to equipment and broadband and will provide an update. A governor suggested the LA can give out old decommissioned laptops to charities and may be an avenue to explore.

A governor asked about work for any children who are having to self-isolate, that is, individual cases, rather than when there has been the whole year group out. Ordinarily a teacher will make contact with the remote learning package - the teacher will put work out for the children to complete. It’s a case of learning as they go. This is now known as “blended learning” - putting together work done at school and work done at home.

A governor asked about plans for children who did not have internet access for online materials. The Head Teacher replied if there’s not an online option available for them there are paper elements which can be sent out - e.g. White Rose maths worksheets. Very few families will be in that situation, based on what we know about the families.

A governor asked about some of the funding which has been held back and whether this could be used for children in this situation? The response was that this could be used for 121 teaching and to broaden it out to more pupils who might need it.

A governor asked about the teachers themselves: there has been a huge ask of them this term, being in school and preparing for possible future scenarios, so how are they? The Head Teacher replied that they are very lucky to have tight units within phase groups who support each other well. There has been a high level of expectations for achievement during this period, but there will be errors which creep in, and there will be an inevitable learning curve - something that needs to be communicated to parents. Parental expectations at the moment are really high and staff are going above and beyond what is required of them.

A governor asked if there were any wellbeing issues raised after the fortnight closure for Y5/6 - were there any challenges to learn from for the future? A staff member replied that the children have really bounced back. A lot of material had been prepared for the slow return, talking about being off and exploring feelings, but Milverton children were more interested in getting back into learning. Teams meetings with Y5/6 were really beneficial for keeping the children connected to each other. A parent governor felt that the two-week closure had worked much better than the longer lockdown, but the Head Teacher reminded the FGB that the closure was for the oldest, most resilient group of children and so not to expect the same should Y1/2 close, for example.

The Head Teacher asked for governors’ support on the home learning initiative, which was unanimously given.

Action: governors to put together communication to parents to demonstrate how decisions are challenged and scrutinised. ZM to work on this with MF and governors to mail ZM with suggestions here.

**9 - Marle House visit**

Official confirmation has been received that this visit will be cancelled. There was the possibility of moving this to Easter, which was met with a mixed response from parents, so alternatives are being investigated and will be put to a vote amongst the parents.

**10 - AOB**

The governor area will be moved on to OneDrive to minimise compatibility issues between Microsoft and Google, and Teams will be used for meetings. The clerk will investigate this with Alastair Geddes and will inform the FGB of how the transition will be made.

Signed: ………………………………………………….

Dated: …………………………………………………..