

Minutes of the meeting of the
Full Governing Body of Milverton Primary School
Held on 8th December 2020, 7pm

Present

Catherine Robbins (CR)	Vice-Chair of FGB
Matt Fisher (MF)	Head Teacher
Anne-Claire Bennion (AB)	Governor
Zoe Morrissey (ZM)	Chair of FGB
Marianne Talbot (MT)	Governor
Hannah Stephenson (HS)	Governor
Colin Baran (CB)	Governor
Danielle Belmega (DB)	Deputy Head Teacher
Margaret Wagstaff (MW)	Governor
Tracey Brand (TB)	Teacher
Clare McNicholas	Governor
Farzana Meru (FM)	Governor (joined the meeting at 7.40pm)

In attendance:

Helen Stares (C)	Clerk to the Governors
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1 – Welcome and apologies

Apologies were received from Laura Nicol, Liz Kay and Helen Love.

The Chair welcomed all governors to the meeting.

2 – Administration

Declarations of interest: none received.

Notification of AoB: none

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

Action log:

- Learning walks still on hold until Governors can go into school - aiming for summer, depending on COVID
- Governor Training - dates for training sessions have been shared and there's a good attendance at training from the LA
- Governors asked to let the Clerk know if they have had engagement with teachers at the school/visits, etc
- Declaration of Interests: still missing a few, the Clerk to chase up on this
- Communication to parents regarding the complaints process has been sent out

ACTION: Clerk to confirm calendar for next meeting in the Governor Space

3 – Head Teacher’s report

There has been a drop in the size of a couple of year groups - linked to when parents notified MPS that spaces wouldn't be taken vs the Census Day - this has had an impact on finances. The number of pupils with EAL (English as an Additional Language) has risen.

School attendance: whilst nationally, most schools have been below 90%, Milverton Primary School has been around 96%, a reflection of a high proportion of working parents who want children in school.

A governor asked whether there was any response from parents to the note sent by the Chair to all parents. The Head Teacher said that since the note was published, there have been no more complaints. This also coincided with more information sent out about home-learning.

Safeguarding Review:

The Head Teacher explained that “green forms” are the reporting mechanism used in school, and that he expects to see a steady flow of these. The Clerk asked about broader concerns in the UK about children after lockdown - were there any concerns around specific individuals? The Head Teacher replied that he was aware other schools have reported a big increase in safeguarding concerns, and an increase in children’s anxiety, but MPS has not had the same increase in needing to intervene from a safeguarding point of view.

The Governors noted that there had been two GDPR data breaches. They were assured that both matters had been resolved and no further escalation was necessary.

School development plan:

Curriculum actions have been temporarily replaced with remote learning plans, so any further work on the Curriculum is being postponed until after Christmas. The PE and Sports Premium document will be uploaded to the website.

A Governor asked about how NQTs are getting on? The Head Teacher replied that lesson observations have been done and both are doing a brilliant job, working very hard and responsive to feedback. The children have also been providing lots of positive feedback on the new teachers.

There have been a number of staff meetings, all done remotely.

Curriculum visits and enrichment:

A few short walks have been done, but formalised trips have been difficult. The Head Teacher is hoping to do some after Christmas as lockdown has prevented them. With parents not on site, they haven't seen what's going on in classrooms, so Weduc will be used to share more with parents.

School sports have been hit badly by COVID, and MPS have been doing online challenges to share with other schools - MPS finished in 2nd place.

FOMPS have taken on a drive for creative ways to raise money - over £3,000 raised in the autumn term, which has been a fantastic achievement given there have been no face-to-face events.

A Governor asked about Parent Learning Review meetings on Teams. The Head Teacher has received lots of positive comments: sticking to timings better, teachers found it worked well, sending report cards home in advance helped parents understand their child's performance better, which meant they were asking more detailed questions rather than just covering the performance itself. The downside to the remote meetings was that parents were unable to look through books but some work was photocopied and sent home.

A Governor asked how teachers found having more difficult conversations over video. Staff considered that it was potentially easier as against having these conversations with parents in the same room. Extra time was given to some parents where a deeper conversation was needed. It also worked well for classes with two teachers. There's a possibility that this might continue in future. A Parent Governor agreed with the positive comments but raised a concern that this takes parents another step away from the school. Could this be replaced by some other meaningful contact? A staff member agreed that personal contact is better, but the online meetings worked well for parents who hadn't previously been able to attend Learning Review Meeting, and that they should look into a compromise position.

Assessment data:

Staff are handing in their reports later in this week. A Governor asked why boys are singled out? Head Teacher said that it is reporting under-performing groups.

There were no further questions.

4 – Committee Reports

Premises - Catherine Robbins

- Three new governors on the Premises Committee - reviewed Terms of Reference closely
- Thorough COVID update: health and safety impact on the school (rather than teaching and learning). A number of areas were highlighted as needing review. The Committee considered these areas and were assured that everything was being done to keep children and staff safe.
- Terms of Reference - committee is responsible for checking the school's website compliance - will be done before the end of January.
- The Head Teacher outlined governors' role for the Premises Committee. Inspecting the building was done by a committee member who is employed by the school.
- Playground development - aiming for the end of next term for a new piece of equipment for younger children.
- It was a useful meeting covering the role of the committee and the development of the school and its building.

Performance & Standards - Hannah Stephenson

- Lots of COVID-related discussion at the committee meeting, some minor changes to Health & Safety related activities, but things have been rectified as and when needed
- Teaching and learning – there was a discussion about how to teach if bubbles have to close. Parents are much more confident on the new platforms following the Learning Review Meetings
- Lots of preparation in place if bubbles close or if children have to isolate, including how to help children who don't have access to technology. Governor asked if any parents have asked to remove children from school early to isolate pre-Christmas. Head Teacher had not received any specific requirements, but a couple of families were taking more time off before Christmas due to medical needs.
- The school is aware of the “learning divide” for children who don't have access to technology. Head Teacher updated on a fundraising drive from one parent: 1 - to raise funds for equipment, 2 - to increase access to WiFi at home. They have been raising money and also received 10 laptops from a parent who runs a related business, plus a couple of other laptops have been donated
- There is still £6k of catch-up funding which hasn't been spent yet and will be allocated according to need
- A phonics workshop for parents was held for Reception in November
- WEDUC app - mixed views on this, but still early days
- Policy tracker - Chairs' Meeting to review this

ACTION: Chairs' Committee to review the Policy Tracker for consistency

Finance & Personnel – Clare McNicholas

- The main focus of the committee meeting was the finance report and staff update
- The school is still looking at an end-of-year deficit, and therefore carrying over a bigger deficit into the next financial year. Pre-COVID the plan was to pay it off over three years. If things return to normal, it is hoped that a dent in this will be made over the next couple of years
- The school has received some extra funding for additional costs incurred, not as much as hoped, but the criteria for receiving this are really strict
- With regards to the future impact on finances MPS was 5 pupils down on Census Day (which was out of MPS' control), and the Business Manager was hoping WAM will break even this year as numbers are back up
- A letter from LA finance officer was received after the meeting which questioned the School Business Manager and the Head Teacher about the figures. MPS is in a good position compared with other schools who have had additional financial challenges. There will be a reduction in SEN children which will impact budget and teacher pay scales - both of which are out of MPS' control
- Staff update - now shielding has come to an end, staff back in school, various changes to staff relating to sick- and maternity-leave

5 – Chair's Update

A letter had been received on specific dietary requirements - Head Teacher is

working on this.

There have been no further complaints following the Chair's note on WEDUC.

The Head Teacher is working hard getting videos on to the MPS website for future parents to look at.

The Chair and two governors recently attended Safeguarding Training. Additional dates have been added to this and it was very valuable training.

The Chair has also attended Chair's training which had a focus on strategic thinking. She is hoping to run a session in the summer term when this can be done in person.

6 – Governor Challenge Refresh

The Head Teacher took the attendees of the meeting through the Governor Challenge document. This covered what the role covers, stressing the importance of having a culture in which Governors challenge him and ask questions, giving some examples of questions to clarify understanding, questions which present challenge, when it's best to ask questions, and examples of inappropriate challenge which would go outside of the Code of Conduct.

The Governors were encouraged to think about the Strategic Direction for the school to take, thinking about a 3-5 year plan, outside the "normal" working of the school.

A Governor mentioned that recent training was particularly useful in defining where the line is between strategic and operational and encouraged other Governors to attend this training too.

Another Governor suggested that a Governors' Annual Report to parents might be useful in driving engagement with parents, especially this year when communication has been difficult.

7 – Link Reports/SDP monitoring guidance

A Governor outlined SDP monitoring and what the actions and responsibilities are arising from this. It enables Governors to take an interest in a particular subject area.

A Governor asked the Head Teacher to clarify about the curriculum review deep dives raised in his report. The Head Teacher explained there are several priority subjects for this year as all cannot be covered in one year, so there's an in-depth review of a number of subjects each year. Additionally, every year they look in-depth at English and Maths.

A Governor asked how they will see the Red/Amber/Green rating for each subject. This will be circulated to Governors separately.

The next meeting in January will focus on the Autumn term SDP and longer-term plans

for each subject area.

With regards to SDP monitoring, there is a template for Governors to fill in, to record what has been covered in the Governor Visit. This needs to be sent to the subject teacher, and once agreed sent to the Head Teacher and the Clerk to be uploaded

ACTION: HS and the Clerk to work together to tidy up the Governor Area and make it easier to find the relevant information (MPS Governor Docs, SDP, SDP monitoring)

ACTION: HS's slides to be included in the Governor Area and to be circulated to the Full Governing Body

ACTION: Head Teacher to circulate the SEF once RAG ratings have been received

8 – AOB

As of today, the Government are suggesting that schools take the 18th December as a teacher day. This may well be met unfavourably by working parents.

A Governor asked the Head Teacher if a) the staff felt they need it and b) whether it could be on a different day? The Head Teacher replied that training days are planned in already and this wouldn't be useful in terms of training, especially as schools would be expected to lose a training day later in the year. The LA are keen to do this.

After some discussion, it was agreed that this had to be a decision taken by the Head Teacher, as there were a lot of factors at play.

The Head Teacher wanted to express his thanks for all the Governors' support over what has been a particularly challenging year. This was echoed back to both the head and the staff members.

Date of the next FGB meeting: Thursday, 15th October, 7pm

Signed.....

Dated.....

Action Log

- Clerk to confirm calendar for next meetings in the Governor Space
- Chairs' Committee to review the Policy Tracker for consistency
- HS and the Clerk to work together to tidy up the Governor Area and make it easier to find the relevant information (MPS Governor Docs, SDP, SDP monitoring)
- HS's slides to be included in the Governor Area and to be circulated to the Full Governing Body

- o Head Teacher to circulate the SEF once RAG ratings have been received