

Minutes of the meeting of the
Full Governing Body of Milverton Primary School
Held on 10th December 2019

Present

Catherine Robbins (CR)	Co-opted Governor, Chair of FGB
Hannah Stephenson (HS)	Parent Governor, Chair of Performance & Standards
Alex Davidson (AD)	Parent Governor
Clare McNicholas (CMcN)	Co-opted Governor, Chair of Finance & Personnel
Zoe Morrissey (ZM)	Parent Governor
Maggie Wagstaff (MW)	Co-opted Governor
Nigel Perry (NP)	Co-opted Governor
Andrew McKirgan (AMcK)	Co-opted Governor
Liz Kay (LK)	Parent Governor
Tom Sidwell (TS)	Co-opted Governor
Tracey Brand (TB)	Co-opted Staff Governor
Laura Nicol (LN)	Elected Staff Governor
Danielle Belmega (DB)	Co-opted, Deputy Headteacher
Matt Fisher (MF)	Headteacher

In attendance:

Joanna Bloomfield (C)	Clerk
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1. **Welcome and apologies**

CR welcomed all those present, particularly **Laura Nicol** who was attending her first FGBM. Apologies for absence were received from **Carol Barnes-Burrell (CBB)**, **Lis Blair (LB)** and **Jo Mainwaring (JoM)**.

2. **MPS Lead – Relationship and Sex Education at Milverton - Christine Habel**

The teaching of RSE became mandatory in maintained schools in September 2020, although MPS has always chosen to teach the subject. Since September 2019 the school has been trialling the new Warwickshire agreed scheme 'All About Me' which uses the same language as protective behaviours lessons which are taught each year in the autumn term. The Relationship Education sections are compulsory at primary level but parents can choose to remove their child/children from three specified Sex Education lessons.

The scheme starts with a lessons grid for the whole school from reception to year 6 and provides detailed objectives including resources required and activities to be done, with suggestions on how to explain and encourage discussion, for each lesson. **CH** explained that the content is age appropriate, engaging and fun, containing nothing that children should not know at that age and showed a year 1 lesson plan entitled 'Being Naked' that includes naming body parts, what personal and public behaviour looks like and role play around bath time. Teachers are encouraged to use the NSPCC Pantosaurus video and PANTS rules. Year 5 lessons include

questioning notions of binary gender identification with #Like a Girl and year 6 learn about consent and intimacy.

MPS teachers have had initial training from a WES representative who will return to meet with each year group. A parent meeting will be held before the curriculum is taught across one week in the summer term. The scheme, and MPS, promotes an open and inclusive environment with teachers happy and available to answer questions from parents and children at any time.

Governors asked whether many parents opt out of the Sex Education lessons: two in twelve years. Governors noted that WES also provides access for parents to see what is being taught through 'All About Me' so that they can be prepared for questions. The scheme has been developed by WES and agreed throughout the county where it is delivered free of charge to all schools. WES is now selling the scheme to other areas.

Governors discussed the recent headlines created by a Birmingham school introducing a similar scheme and acknowledged that not all the media coverage was accurate. Some of the opposition had come from teaching about same sex relationships but Britain is an open society which should be reflected in education. Governors asked how the school will keep up to date, particularly on issues such as transgender, and whether the website guidance on how to answer questions is updated: the message is basic and clear and covers all variations of relationships.

Governors commented that there had been many discussions over the years about the teaching of RSE at MPS and it was good to see the outdated resources replaced. Governors agreed that the DfE taking the decision of whether or not to teach the subject out of the school's hands makes it more likely that the schools will have the parents onside. Governors also noted that the issue of consent is particularly important for teenagers and that this should be discussed earlier rather than later.

CH explained that MPS informs the parents what questions have been asked and answered so that they may follow up at home.

3. **Administration**

Declaration of Interest for this meeting. There were no Declarations of Interest for this meeting.

Notification of Any Other Business.

There were no notifications of Any Other Business.

Minutes of last meeting.

The minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting held on **17th October 2019** were approved. Governors discussed the Milverton Mile referenced in the minutes: it is being trialled in different classes in different ways with **Alastair Geddes's** class starting during lunchtimes.

Action Log.

CR went through the action log with the following comments:

- All actions were either closed or on the agenda.

Correspondence

CR reported that she had received the following communication:

- Information from the LA warning governors that head teachers' salaries should stay within the recommended range.
- The new Complaints Policy tool kit from the LA. This is extensive and requires being Milvertonised. It will be discussed at the Chairs meeting before going to the F&P Committee.
- Two Governance Matters Newsletters, both packed full of information and links to other documents and articles. The updated list of policies which schools are required to have will be discussed at the Chairs meeting.
- Letter from the LA giving the school a categorization letter of 'A' (excellent), although the school's RAG rating is still red due to the financial situation. Governors suggested that schools should be able to comment on the level of support received from the WES via the WES customer satisfaction survey.

4. **Governor Training**

Governors were given a general reminder to keep attending training sessions. **CR** explained that the Cluster fully intends to continue arranging collaborative training sessions three times a year but is slightly less well organized than in the last couple of years. Committee minutes should contain reports of governing training.

It was acknowledged that governors can experience difficulty in getting on courses due to prior commitments and the fact that many sessions are held in the north of the county. It is understood that this is cyclical on part of WES Governor Services and within the next two years, sessions will be held in the south of the county.

Governors confirmed that any training that relates to the role of governance can be counted as governor training, even if it is not delivered by WES or the NGA, and should be reported in the same way.

Governors were reminded that The Key podcast was a good way of keeping up with new developments.

The November edition of Governance Matters included a link to NGA e.learning:
<https://www.nga.org.uk/Training-and-Development/NGA-Learning-Link-e-learning.aspx>

5. **Committee Reports** *including outcomes and impact on SDP priorities*

Premises

(minutes previously uploaded to The Governor Space)

AD reported that the Committee had discussed, among other issues:

- The change to the system by which parents can contact teachers by email.

Parents had previously been able to email teachers directly at any time as their welearn365 email addresses were listed on the school website but now all emails go through a central school address and are forwarded on to individual teachers during the school day. **MF** explained that it will take a while for staff to get used to the system and realise that they do not need to respond immediately to out-of-hours communications. So far there have been no problems and the Premises Committee will revisit the issue after half-term.

- The Emergency Lock-down drill has not yet taken place. **MF** has talked to the parents and staff had been taken through the process on the recent INSET day. **MF** now needs to talk to children again and arrange a date to do the drill.

Governors asked about the new automatic gate: **MF** and **Terry Heard** have been shown how to turn the motor off so that it can act as a normal gate during school drop-off and collection times, yet still be opened remotely during WAM hours. The exceptional high use of the motor seems to be at the root of the problems.

CR commended the Premises Committee on the close monitoring of the wide range of issues that it covers.

Finance & Personnel

(minutes previously uploaded to the Governor Space)

CMcN reported that the Committee had met early in the half term in preparation for the SAG meeting.

- Discussion had been dominated by the budget and how to approach the LA's suggested course of action. Following the last F&P Committee meeting, **MF** had spoken to the staff and was implementing the idea of creating a supply TA role to reduce the cost of employing external supply staff. This will be a re-deployment of one of the current TAs and will begin in the New Year once a selection process has taken place.
- Following on from the Benchmarking report by **Yvonne Staniford** for SAG, **MF** has been in contact with the other head teachers to discuss where there are variations which has only confirmed the understanding that all schools are run differently and that numbers only tell part of the story. **MF** will circulate the report before the next F&P Committee meeting.
- The Government has promised all LAs some additional money for education and MPS is hopeful that the whole amount allocated will be forwarded because of the larger than usual number of EHPCs.
- The WAM finances are looking good, providing additional support for the school.
- The school DPO has undertaken the annual GDPR audit. They were happy with the situation at MPS but the final report had not yet been received.

Sustainability Action Group (SAG)

The meeting took place recently and the LA does not want to see MPS again. The 2020-21 budget has to be correctly submitted but the group was confident that the school was being sensible in its decision making process.

Governors asked whether the LA representatives had understood the MPS approach to their original suggestions. **MF**: the LA generally has a more black and white

outlook but were positive about the approach that MPS is taking. They are keen to use WAM as a case study for other schools.

Performance & Standards

(minutes previously uploaded to the Governor Space)

HS reported that the Committee had discussed:

- The Attendance Report which showed that MPS has above average attendance, although ACE is still supporting one family.
- The annual Safeguarding Report which this year had no actions required. **HS**, as Safeguarding Governor, and the P&S Committee will continue to monitor safeguarding at school. **Louisa Wallace** has complete mastery of the Single Central Register and met with **HS** to discuss this again last week. She is also reviewing and renewing the personnel file of every member of staff.
- The new RSE Policy will be reviewed at the next meeting.
- The Assessment Policy, including updates relating to LA moderation, a four year cycle of moderation and added Governor involvement with regular feedback, and the Marking and Feedback Policy have been signed off.
- KS2 writing. The Committee had challenged the lower than expected Year 4 attainment results. **DB** gave such a thorough presentation on the school's understanding of the situation and the processes put in place to remedy it that the Committee decided to review again at the end of the year, rather than termly. It was a really positive affirmation of the work of the MPS teachers and staff.
- Governor Reports. The annual SEND report is now on the website and **MW** also submitted a report on EYFS.
- The updated monitoring review form which includes a focus for each meeting is now available on the Governor Space.
- The Governor Walk and School Council meeting was covered in the school Newsletter.
- Governor presence at Parent/Teacher evenings had been awkward and this will be discussed further at the Chairs meeting.

Cluster Chairs' Meeting

Minutes of the Cluster Chairs Meeting previously uploaded to the Governor Space.

CR reported that:

- Chairs were attempting to get an overview of the way the Cluster adds value to individual schools and whether the current way of funding represents value for money. There is £34,000 still in the pot but this is a left-over from when the Cluster employed a co-ordinator.
- **MF** has been appointed as the new Head of the North Leamington Cluster as well as Subject Group leader. This responsibility includes dividing out roles within the Cluster, chairing meetings, corresponding with the LA and looking after the finances.
- Cluster Chairs discussed whether to initiate governor network groups, for example for new governors. This will be discussed at the MPS Chairs Committee meeting.
- Cluster Chairs recognised that organising collaborative training could be

challenging and that they should support the training co-ordinator by making suggestions for training topics. Cluster Chairs will pick up on the issues at the next meeting.

- Most of the Cluster schools have now signed up to the Joint Hearings Panel and will be able to call on governors from the other schools, when required.
- The School Forum had discussed the Warwickshire funding deficit, particularly in the area of High Needs Funding, an on-going problem.

CR commented that she was pleased that MPS had re-claimed its position as a leader amongst the Cluster schools.

7. **Governor Challenge** – Ofsted expectations and how it looks in practice.

Presentation now in meeting folder on Governor Space.

MF gave a presentation based on the NGA document 'Being Strategic' giving governors guidance on what is their role in challenging, but stopping short of being a nuisance, to school.

The governors role is to ensure 'clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; to hold the executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff, as well as overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent'. This includes a 'commitment to asking challenging questions and the confidence to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people'.

Governors should be aware of the line between governance and management. This became evident at MPS during the last year when the Site Inspection report was reviewed, looking at what was strategic and therefore part of the Premises Committee's responsibility, and what was day to day management and therefore the school's responsibility. Governors should also govern ethically, being aware of the Nolan Principles of Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership which underline the MPS Governor Code of Conduct.

Governors are provided with a lot of documents to read and should use these as the basis for any challenge required. Governors acknowledge that at MPS they are privileged to receive more information than at many schools, with members of the SLT coming to talk to the FGB and governors and teachers meeting to discuss different aspects of the SDP.

Challenge can be difficult as there are not often many places for governors to present a challenge. When looking at the school data, the lowest figures do not necessarily mean there is an emergency as the figures are relative and there is usually an improvement plan already in place. A legitimate governor challenge would be around the impact of the plan, whether it was having the desired effect. **MF** will organise a Governor Walk in the summer term, building in time to see evidence of progress, particularly where interventions have been put in place, in work books.

Inappropriate challenges include making demands; questioning the specifics; using inaccurate or opinionated questioning; taking the side of a friend in challenging the school; continuing on a line of challenge once an explanation has been presented and anything outside the Code of Conduct. Governors asked whether MPS teachers felt they were subject to inappropriate challenge: all at some time, especially if staff do not have a lot of contact with governors and they do not have any forewarning of what they may be asked, but the new pro forma (which gives a focus to meetings) will help. Some of the SLT, Phase Leaders and Subject Leaders are only in school three days a week. Governors suggested that **MF** show the presentation to staff so that all involved know what is expected.

Governors discussed that some of the advice from governance organizations are written for schools which are coasting, a very different position from MPS, and therefore the suggestions for challenges are inappropriate. When ascertaining what is an appropriate challenge, governors should start with the documents and data provided, asking questions to clarify understanding, possibly suggesting some ideas for consideration, questioning whether relevant policies and procedures have been followed and offering opinions when asked.

Governor access to school data usually comes through the Headteacher's report at every other FGBM, and the Performance & Standards Committee reports where data is closely monitored. These reports are created using government published data including the Ofsted Primary Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) and Analyse School Performance (ASP). **MF** showed governors how these two web based reports look, as it had proved too difficult to get every governor access. The data shows that phonics results were very strong with 89% of the EYFS cohort on track against a national figure of 82%, although it should be taken into account that the 2018 intake was a very good year. Governors confirmed that the Phonics Tests were teacher administered and that teachers know where each child is at any point in the year.

MF explained that the IDSR has recently been reformatted with Ofsted now looking at three year trends. KS1 and KS2 reading is consistently significantly above national standards and mathematics is also above national standards with a three year increase in attainment. The standardised score for children working at Greater Depth is 110 (against an absolute average of 100). Boys' writing is slightly lower and, although not a significant issue, the school will look to improve on this again.

Governors asked whether any children were falling significantly below national standard and what would the school do differently to change this: Pupil Progress Meetings are held every term and teachers have a very good idea where each child sits. Staff are able to dig deeper into the data and look at the outliers. Every year **CTP** reports back on a Question Level Analysis which ascertains whether any particular question had been difficult and therefore may skew the outcomes. The school creates a case study for any child who has not met the standard, giving their story and evidencing progress. Governors agreed that MPS tracks each child carefully, with secondary schools often commenting on the accuracy of the data at progression, which can be attributed to effective teaching.

MF had circulated the Headteacher's Report containing the distilled Summer term

data prior to the meeting. The areas highlighted blue, indicating 90% of children on track with 35% of those working at greater depth, is extremely strong running through school. Governors asked whether each year group was compared with the national average: no, only at end of KS2 (year 2) and KS2 (year 6). There are no national figures for years 3, 4 and 5 so the data simply shows the percentages in school.

MF has added key questions relating to Leadership & Management, Buildings & Grounds and Behaviour & Safety. Governors noted that school numbers are up and reported that SAG were impressed by the constant requests from parents looking to send their children to MPS. When at school, attendance is high at 97.4% against a national figure of 96.1%. The report also contains the Safeguarding review with a three year comparison. Governors acknowledged that the report contains a lot of information.

Governor discussed whether it is problematic for the school data that a number of children have English as a second language (EAL), especially in years 5 & 6: there are a number of children at MPS for whom English is not their first language but there are none who have no English. The school works with those who struggle which can be a challenge in reading and writing, especially if the child is too young to read in their first language but if a child has only been in the country within two years of SATs tests, they are not included in the data. **MF** explained that **Alastair Geddes** has introduced a programme with volunteers from the parent/grandparent body bringing their different languages into school to help pupils. Governors understood that around the age of seven is the best time to learn a new language and noted that there is potential to show good progress between KS1 and KS2 in the coming years.

Action

FGBM2019-20/28: MF to arrange a Governor Walk for the Summer term.

8. **Link Reports**

Design & Technology

AMcK reported that he had met with **Gemma Smith** for fact finding and background information. D&T has been mandatory in state schools since 2015 with the DfE setting a national curriculum to which schools can add. It is a practical subject which promotes creativity and important skills such as risk taking. It gives children the opportunity to design and make an item, during which they have to solve problems, apply solutions, test the product and then evaluate their work. Along the way children learn collaborative working, time management, how to order work and meet deadlines. As well as designing and creating their own products, children investigate existing products looking at the design, making evaluations and proving how they work.

Educationally, children learn about materials and tools and the process draws on a lot of disciplines from across different subjects in the KS1 and KS2 curriculum requirements. Scientifically, children study electronic circuits and historically they look at items made by the Ancient Egyptians. Pupils are assessed on three levels of apprentice, professional or expert.

Engagement with the Cluster is improving and children will be able to see and evaluate products from other schools as well as, collectively, providing more facilities for a joint project such as nutrition. The Cluster is also trying to identify outside companies who would be prepared to work with schools on a larger scale.

Mathematics

Presentation slides now uploaded to Governor Space.

LK explained that in the last eighteen months she had made five visits to school in her capacity as Maths Link Governor and was impressed by the level of energy and investment in maths since the 2016-17 SDP focus. Attainment has always been strong at MPS but progress had appeared slightly disappointing in 2017-18.

The Mastery approach is going well. This helps to make maths more relevant as well as fun and engaging. It includes problem solving and reasoning, for example how many teeth are there in school, how many dental appointments are needed and how would they go about finding the answers?

Caroline Tribe-Philips is the Lead of a Teacher Research Group (*'collaborative professional development in action, a TRG is a group of teachers working collaboratively to improve their practice'*) which includes a mentor from another school and holds half termly training courses, currently concentrating on KS2 Greater Depth learning. An Educational Consultant has also been employed to run Subject Leader groups, advising a number of teachers.

CTP and **Gemma Smith** are now disseminating their knowledge and skills to other MPS teachers and monitoring teaching of maths across the curriculum throughout the school, for which **CTP** keeps folders of evidence including photographs and presentations.

Targeted support to improve numbers working at Greater Depth and for Pupil Premium children includes ten to fifteen minutes of 'Fluency Time' outside of lesson time. **CTP** is arranging auditing and monitoring of Mathematics and is hoping to start a lunch time Mathematics Club run by children.

LK explained that the new teaching and learning strategies are already resulting in raising attainment and progress with the 2019 SATS results showing an improvement in the number of children working at expected level (2018= 89%, 2019 = 91%) and at Greater Depth (2018=20%, 2019=43%) against national figures (2018=76%, 2019=79% and 2018=24%, 2019=27%) and the progress score is now positive (2018 -0.22, 2019 +0.45).

LK urged the team to 'keep going' with the improvements and explained that she would be meeting with **CTP** to discuss the progress of Pupil Premium children, which is still a little lower than liked.

CR commented that governors are now confident that **CTP** is putting plans into action which **LK** has evidenced and reported to all governors.

9. **SDP – overview and final 2018-19 monitoring**

HS explained that the P&S Committee had added a new section to the pro forma for reporting governor SDP visits, giving each visit a focus:

Start of Autumn Term (September):

- Review of the overall impact evaluation question from the previous years' SDP
- Review previous years' data (core subjects only)

Start of Spring Term (January)

- Review Autumn Term SDP
- Review of long-term plans for the subject area (including seeing objectives / assessment for the subject area)

Start of Summer Term (April/May)

- Review Spring Term SDP
- Progression of work in books for subject areas
- Core Subjects: Working Towards / Working At / Working At Greater Depth
- Foundation subjects: apprentice / professional / expert

Governors should use the new pro forma which has been circulated and is on the Governor Space.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1pJ5P3tL3wEVsSuzMI50qGwclehZewDWv>

10. **Headteacher's Report**

Previously circulated by email.

See discussion above.

11. **GDPR**

As the final report had not yet been received, the Clerk was asked to put GDPR on the next FGBM agenda.

Action

FGBM2019-10/29: Clerk to put GDPR on the agenda for the next FGBM.

12. **Safeguarding**

Governors had been asked to read 'Keeping Children Safe in Education part one – September 2019', which was in the Governor Space folder for this meeting, so that they could answer a short questionnaire about the guidance and how safeguarding looks at MPS. They were then asked to sign to confirm that they had read the document.

13. **Parental Engagement**

CR explained that she and **MW** had attended the Phonics Talks in the autumn term, which had been a good opportunity to connect with parents. Governors at the Parent Teacher evenings were less comfortable as parents were focussed on their children's work and governors felt that they were intruding. It was suggested that governors could help to circulate and collect the questionnaire on the Parent

Teacher evenings, giving them an opportunity to open discourse. The Chairs' meeting will discuss how governors present themselves to parents at the next meeting.

14. **AOB**

There were no items of Any Other Business.

Items for exclusion

There were no items for exclusion.

Date of next FGBM

The next Full Governing Body Meeting will be held on Tuesday 11th February 2020

Governors agreed to move the March FGBM from Thursday 26th to Tuesday 24th.

Signed:

Dated:

Actions

FGBM19-12-10	
FGBM2019-20/28	MF to arrange a Governor Walk for the Summer term.
FGBM2019-20/29	Clerk to put GDPR on the agenda for the next FGBM.