

MILTON ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Body

Monday 21st March 2016



****THIS MEETING WAS HELD IN THE LIBRARY****

Present: Sylvie Baird (SB – Chair; left the meeting for item 6.4), Susan Dobbs (SD – Interim Head Teacher), Ysanne Austin (YA), Gavin Bierman (GB), Marco Donzelli (MD), Danny Godfrey (DG), Matthew Hodgson (MH); Miriam Kubica (MK), Neil Morris (NM), Ian Nimmo-Smith (INS), Iain Thomas (IPT), and Karen Watson (KW).

The meeting was quorate throughout.

Also in attendance: Hannah Carter (HC) - Deputy Head Teacher; Carol Bretten (CB) – Finance Officer.

Clerk: Graham Whiting (GW) – Locum Camclerk.

		Action
1.	Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence	
1.1	The Chair opened the meeting at 6.30pm by welcoming all governors and staff present.	
1.2	Apologies had been received and were accepted from Rolf Purvis (RP).	
2.	Declaration of Interests	
	No new declarations and none regarding items on the agenda.	
3.	Formal approval of the minutes of the Full Governing Body meetings held on 8th February 2016 and 12th February 2016	
3.1	With one minor amendment – the action point under item 2.3 was amended from GW to CB - governors formally approved the minutes of 8th February 2016, which had been made available on the G Drive in advance.	
3.2	Governors also formally approved the minutes of 12th February 2016, which had likewise been made available on the G Drive in advance.	
4.	Matters arising from the minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held on 8th February 2016	
4.1	In respect of policies SD advised that she and CB are working through the list and plan to quality assure everything after Easter. Hard copies of all policies will be signed and dated and retained by CB, who will then take the lead in terms of bringing reviews to	

Date Circulated for Review:

29-03-16 (items 1-6 only)

02-04-16

Date Reviews Completed:

18-04-16

Date Circulated to

FGB: 18-04-16

Version 3: 18-04-16

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4.2	<p>relevant notice and maintaining a centralised record. CB was developing a standard cover sheet for policies and MK offered support with a protocol for policies, with the aim of creating a consistent approach.</p> <p>The updated Action List had been made available on the G drive in advance. Governors went through it and agreed that the following actions, which had either been completed or were listed on the agenda for discussion, would be removed from the grid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>8th February 2016: items 5.4, 8.2, 10.4, 12.2 (first action point, 13.2 (MK advised that 200 responses had been received from 315 families about City Deal)</i> • <i>7th December 2015: items 5.1, 6.1, 7, 10 (final action point, replaced by new action point as per item 5.16 below)</i> <p>It was agreed that, from now on, a date will be set relevant to any ongoing or new action points and action owners were encouraged to stay on top of these to keep the momentum. Item 8.3 Link governors who had not yet liaised with SB about governor briefs were asked to comment by 20th April. Item 4.2 SD was thanked for taking forward the discussion on developing the ICT strategy, which would be fed back to Teaching and Learning. Item 5.3 HC agreed to liaise with the Castle School with regard to setting up an alternative to Target Tracker for some pupils with SEND. Item 6.2 It was noted that the Pay policy needed further review by SD and the Pay Committee. SD advised that mid-year appraisals were on-going, with formal observations being carried out to ensure appraisal is robust. Item 10 SB asked all governors to consider their individual contribution and to advise over the summer term of any changes to facilitate planning and coverage by the GB team for next academic year.</p>	MK/CB/SD
5.	Interim Head Teacher's Report	
5.1 5.2 5.3	<p>Both SD's report and the notes of the half-termly review meeting are available on the G Drive.</p> <p><u>Key Progress in Spring Term</u></p> <p>SD began by updating governors on her latest meeting with Phil Garnham, Senior Adviser, which had taken place earlier in the day. She commented that, notwithstanding his overall judgement that the school still requires improvement, this is the most positive review so far undertaken and a credit to the work staff have put in.</p> <p>Turning to the earlier half-termly review meeting, SD explained that Anne Fisher has made two visits to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the second of these on 14 March 2016. Leaders are continuing to follow her suggestions; Anne will check these again on her next visit in May and then move onto the leaders of the other Key Stages.</p>	

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5.4	Phil Garnham has also carried out a learning walk and has highlighted various improvements including: effective use of TAs; libraries having been tidied up; good behaviour management. He also noted that while the impact of marking is improving it remains inconsistent.	SD/SB/IPT
5.5	SD then discussed Year 4, expressing her view that although a proportion of the cohort are still not making the required progress, the number of areas in which this is occurring have reduced considerably; in relative terms, therefore, the picture is much better. Stability had been secured, with teaching arrangements in place to July to replace the teacher who had left the school.	
5.6	Three permanent teaching appointments have been offered in LKS2 (Lower Key Stage 2) and two acceptances have already been received. In addition, in KS1, a supply contract has been converted to permanent employment. The second Deputy Head will return after Easter; roles and responsibilities are in the process of being firmed up but it is likely that Nina Burton will take responsibility for EYFS and KS1, with HC overseeing KS2.	
5.7	SD raised the matter of the format of staff well-being meetings (as noted at item 9 of the FGB minutes, 8 th February 2016); i.e. the Head and Deputy had not been invited to attend, which SD believes creates the risk of information being introduced which is not wholly accurate. She added that, in terms of confidentiality, the Authority adviser has a duty of care to the school and so must notify the Head of any significant issues raised by staff. It was agreed the group would benefit from terms of reference (TOR) and that these should signpost how to raise concerns, including through policies developed to support staff, such as raising grievances and whistleblowing as appropriate. SD, IPT and SB agreed to discuss further.	
5.8	On a positive note, SD said she has observed an increasing willingness on the part of staff to be open – she felt they are more comfortable about communicating issues to her and the Deputy. The level of attendance is steady at 96.6%, well above the threshold for persistent absence (90%).	
5.9	There are 37 children on roll with special educational needs.	
	<u>Safeguarding</u>	
5.10	SD has rated all areas Green. SB asked whether this table was the most up to date, as safer recruitment training needs to be completed by a member of staff in light of leadership changes.	
	<u>Monitoring</u>	
5.11	Staff training around Ofsted had taken place earlier on the day of this meeting (see also 5.2 above) at which all attendees were given a copy of the inspectors' checklist. An overview of half-termly progress against the Ofsted criteria will be shared with the Teaching & Learning committee.	
5.12	<u>Activities</u>	SD

5.13	SD highlighted Creative Arts Week; plans for a School Song; and discussions with the School Council about the introduction of a House system, due to take place on 22 March 2016. <u>Key Progress in Spring Term</u>	
5.14	The Teaching & Learning committee will also be invited to monitor progress against the updated Termly Operational Plan (TOP).	SD
5.15	SD will circulate this to all governors as soon as possible.	
Challenge	To a question about how further Authority backing will be funded in the light of the introduction of a traded services system and how the school will maximise school improvement support from the LA, SD advised that the school will still be able to ask for specific help as the Authority is still there to support the school in its current category: e.g. Juliet Adlouné will target Years 2 and 6, given the key significance of data which still points to a downward trend over 3 years, followed by one year's upward movement. DG highlighted the relevance of further data at this time on pupil progress throughout the school, particularly in light of changes to assessment without levels and fundamentally on the quality of teaching. SD advised this would be presented at the next Teaching and Learning committee meeting.	
5.16	SD expressed confidence that the school is reaching the higher end of the Requires Improvement spectrum.	
Challenge	Asked whether the concentration on meeting Ofsted criteria has come at a cost to children's overall experience, SD believes this not to be the case: progress in the standards of teaching and learning and behaviour are at the heart of the new framework and staff are 'living' this – it is what they should be doing, she said. Governor visits should involve speaking to children and also looking at where teachers see things going. This area will be taken forward via the suggested breakfast meeting – GB agreed to set up a Doodle poll to agree a date at the end of April/beginning of May.	GB
5.17	In conclusion, SD invited the meeting to celebrate the clear progress being made - further positive moves are to come. In turn, governors asked SD to pass on their thanks to all staff.	SD
6.	Chair's update	
6.1	SB began by commenting on the drive towards academisation announced in the Budget; the Bill setting out these plans is due to be published on 4 th April 2016. She suggested that a working party be established to explore what academisation means, the various options for partnership, draw from experiences elsewhere and to suggest a timescale bearing in mind such decisions should be given the time they warrant. NM, INS and KW agreed to take this forward and will present a review at the end of the Summer term.	NM INS KW SB
6.2	SB will also draft a note to staff to reassure them that the governing body will be thinking strategically and for the long	

<p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>DECISION</p>	<p>term, looking out for partnership opportunities and remain focused on seeing Milton Road thrive – striving to secure the best outcomes for its children.</p> <p><u>Substantive Head Teacher recruitment</u></p> <p>SB thanked governors for their proactivity in terms of bringing the vacancy to the attention of a wide audience. The advertisement was placed on 17th February 2016, with a closing date for applications of 14th March 2016, Four applications were duly received and two candidates will be interviewed on 13th and 14th April 2016. All governors are invited to attend the assemblies on those days.</p> <p><u>Governance Handbook</u></p> <p>Governors had been asked to read the new Governance handbook, which outlines numerous responsibilities for the GB. Whilst responsibility is shared between all governors, this reaffirms the need to delegate to committees and individuals. It was agreed to map the guidance contained in the handbook into annual planners; SB, MK (non-financial areas) and MH will take this forward.</p> <p>It was also suggested that the school should subscribe to the National Governors Association (NGA) and this sub-set of governors would look at the various forms of membership.</p> <p><u>Vacancy for a Co-opted Governor</u></p> <p>SB left the meeting for this discussion; YA took over as Acting Chair.</p> <p>SB's term of office as a parent governor was due to expire on 30th April 2016. Governors agreed unanimously that it was both prudent and appropriate to invite SB to fill the continuing vacancy for a Co-opted Governor, believing that the additional skills being sought as part of the latter role might equally effectively be engaged via an Associate Member. The overwhelming priority is for continuity at this time, in terms of SB's impressive work as Chair, for which the meeting gave a formal vote of thanks.</p> <p>SB returned to the meeting and agreed to be appointed a Co-opted Governor. GW will notify the School Governance Team (SGT) accordingly.</p> <p>GW advised an election could be set up as soon as convenient to replace SB as a Parent Governor.</p>	<p>SB MK MH</p> <p>SB</p> <p>GW</p> <p>SB/SD</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Reports from Committees</p>	
<p>7.1</p> <p>7.1.1</p> <p>7.1.2</p>	<p><u>Teaching & Learning</u></p> <p>Danny advised that draft minutes were available in the committee folder. He highlighted, in particular, the Gifted & Talented Register and efforts to identify partnerships and put them in place.</p> <p>The report of the monitoring and validation visit, 1st February 2016, had also been made available on the G Drive. INS and NM commented on meeting children and viewing their work books. They pointed out how well the children understood the setting of</p>	

	clear objectives, though they had been less able to articulate what they were actually learning. There is also a need to address issues with spelling. SD responded by emphasising children's self-assessment and individual targets – adding that the focus has moved to skills being learnt, as opposed to activities carried out.	
7.2	<u>Resources</u>	
7.2.1	Matt advised that, inter alia, there was discussion of lettings, the Blue Room and ICT; options and opportunities in respect of the latter will be referred to Teaching & Learning.	MH/DG
7.2.2	The end-of-year budget out-turn for 2015/2016 will show a slight negative, due to the shortfall in the relevant October census. Discussion in committee covered re-allocation and re-structuring of staffing – this will also be shared with Teaching & Learning. GW suggested that given that the budget submission deadline – 8th May (to be definitively confirmed) – is before the next scheduled FGB, the Resources meeting scheduled for the week following the May holiday would need to be quorate as an FGB in order to ratify the budget.	MH/DG
7.2.3	The report of the Authority's internal audit, carried out on 1 October 2015, had been made available on the G Drive in advance. The senior auditor had given the school the lowest comfort rating ('Limited Assurance'), pointing out, inter alia, the low level of evidence and preciseness noted in committee minutes (section 4) and signing-off of internal controls (section 13; this was dealt with subsequently under the item on SFVS – Schools Financial Value Standards - below). CB is following up the remaining issues. However the audit makes it clear it remains the GB's responsibility to implement the senior auditor's recommendations; Charging and Remissions will therefore be listed for discussion at the next FGB. Also, HC will circulate a revised draft Whistleblowing policy for review.	SB/DG
7.2.4	Other financial documents had also been made available in advance on the G Drive: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Value Statement • Internal Financial Procedures Manual • Statement of Internal Control MH thanked those governors who had been involved in the SFVS review and commented that gaps are being resolved. Monitoring processes will form part of Resources agendas on an ongoing basis (he will agree timelines with CB) and he expressed satisfaction that these are sufficiently thorough. He also thanked CB for her work and advised the meeting that SB will be invited to sign off the final SFVS self-assessment once the papers have been collated, ahead of the deadline for submission (24 th March). SB also signed off the Best Value Statement, which covers basic principles across all areas, not just those in the Resources remit.	SB/CB
DECISION		HC
8.	Link Governor reports - Behaviour	CB/SB

8.1	<p>MK's report covering her visits on 7th and 9th March had been made available on the G Drive in advance. The meeting expressed its thanks both to her and to the staff; all concerned have put a lot of work into this area. MK highlighted the guidance available, which she had discussed at length with SD, and commented that behaviour underpins everything that is being done in school. MK outlined a number of positive developments in behaviour management by the school, however, pointed out that the School's reviewed behaviour policy and appendices had not been shared with parents or uploaded onto the school website. MK will make a return visit during the Summer term.</p>	MK
8.2 DECISION	<p>It was agreed to form a Behaviour working party to work on the behaviour principles. This will comprise YA, MK, IPT and SB, plus Nina Burton as Safeguarding lead and the Inclusion Manager.</p>	
9.	GB Training/Development highlights	
9.1	<p><u>Feedback from Governors' Annual Conference, 5th March 2016</u></p> <p>SB's report had been made available in advance on the G Drive. SB commented briefly on this inspiring conference, particularly the developments in teaching and learning at both Spring Common and Hemingford Grey. Re section 4, she advised that she and other school representatives have been invited to visit Hemingford Grey on 26 April to see their approach to learning in action.</p>	
9.2		
9.3	<p><u>Feedback from Improving Governance workshop, 16th February 2016</u></p> <p>SB's report had been made available on the G Drive in advance.</p>	
9.4	<p><u>Governor Briefing</u></p> <p>SB advised that there is a termly briefing at Cambridge Professional Development Centre on Tuesday 10 May. She reminded governors to notify NM of all training attended.</p> <p><u>Preparing for Ofsted</u></p> <p>HC will attend the Ofsted preparation session organised by Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT) on Monday 25th April; this will now take place at North Cambridge Academy (NCA).</p> <p>NM would be in touch about training and development for next term. SB also flagged the opportunity for an in-house training session (included within the service level agreement), which would need to be decided on and booked for the summer term.</p>	
10.	Safeguarding update – Safer Recruitment audit	
	<p>Safer recruitment and Payroll audits had taken place earlier that day, led by the Local Authority and in liaison with CB; the former including checking the last five personnel recruited, covering various levels of staff. A formal report would be made available after Easter. CB advised that the termly check of the Single Central Record had been made with SD.</p>	
11.	Any Other Business	

11.1	NM highlighted the Department of Education consultation on funding. Views on this should be sent to him and MH by the deadline of 17 th April; MK will look at SEND.	
11.2	The meeting with the representative of 'Mobilising Local Energy Investment' had gone ahead as planned and would be discussed by the Resources committee.	
12.	Dates of next meetings	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 14th April 2016 (extraordinary FGB to approve interview panel's recommendations) Monday 9th May 2016 (to take place in the Blue Room) 	
	The meeting closed at 9.05pm	