



## MILVERTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY AND PRE-SCHOOL

### FGB MEETING MINUTES

**Wednesday 21 May 2025, 18.00**

Governors Present		In Attendance	
Linda Burton (Chair)	LA Governor	Rachel Ford	Observer
Clare Adams	Parent Governor	Gloria Hamlet (items 1-5)	Finance Officer
Stephen Jones	Co-opted Governor	Kathryn Lanning	Clerk
Chris Mann	Co-opted Governor		
Kiean Neale	Parent Governor		
Stephen Penny	Staff Governor		
Nicola Stoddart	Headteacher		
Fiona Taylor	Co-opted Governor		
Emily Weiss	Co-opted Governor		

#### **Item 1 – Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were accepted from Martin James and Gwil Wren.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Rachel Ford who was observing the meeting with a view to becoming a co-opted governor.
- 1.3 There were no declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda.

#### **Item 2 – Minutes of the last meeting**

- 2.1 The Board approved the minutes of the FGB meeting held on 26 March 2025.

#### **Item 3 – Matters Arising / Action Tracker (paper)**

- 3.1 The Board noted completed actions and progress on outstanding actions as follows:

FGB held on 29 January 2025			
Para 3.1	Relationships, Sex & Health Education Policy – HT to review for accuracy pending issue of new LA model policy	HT	Done
Para 12.2	Further improvements to be made to school website	HT/ MB	Ongoing

FGB held on 26 March 2025			
Para 2.3	Check if HR adviser available for Appeals Panel meeting 9.30am on 26 June	HT	Done – available
Para 5.1	Follow up potential funding from Parochial Church Council. Approach Milverton Trust for Funding	HT	To do
Para 9.1	Upload school policies to GovernorHub	Clerk	Governors agreed that the clerk would only upload policies to GovernorHub that are not published on the school website.

#### **Item 4 – Finance**

- 4.1 GH reported that the latest figures showed a 2024/25 month 13 balance of £25,072. Savings had been made in areas such as the apprenticeship levy and the local government pension scheme but other budget areas had been overspent, particularly staffing. The After School Club had made £23,339 and the pre-school £1,315 over their initial budgets. GH outlined adjustments that would need to be made, resulting in a carry forward to support the 2025/26 budget of £15,984.
- 4.2 GH advised that County had not yet approved the deficit budget plan for 2025/26. She was now working on version 4, which showed a slight deficit increase of £1,100 for the current year. However, years 2 and 3 of the budget plan now showed a deficit reduction, with year 2 falling from £102k to £89k and year 3 falling from £163k to £114k. This was partly a result of changes such as a reduction in staffing costs, but also higher estimated pupil numbers. The HT felt that previous estimates had been too cautious. She reported that 15 in-year pupil transfers were taking place over the next few weeks and 30 children would be joining Reception in September. GH commented that she had asked County if there could be any additional financial support for children coming onto role this term, as the school would not receive funding for them until 2026/27. However County had confirmed that this would only apply in cases where they had asked schools to take children, rather than in year transfers.

Question: is running a deficit budget becoming the norm for schools?

Response (GH): yes – teacher pay rises in particular have contributed to the problem since they are not, as the government suggests, fully-funded.

Question: is it possible to make any further cuts?

Response (GH): we met recently with the school funding team to go through the draft budget plan and they agreed that there was no room for further reductions.

Question: is it possible to develop additional revenue streams?

Response (GH): we are waiting to see what happens with pre-school income; new software enables the school to be on top of funding opportunities for pre-school. However, it is difficult for schools to create funding streams as they can only apply for grants for specific projects. Fundraising and work carried out by the Milverton School Association help to keep costs down but the building and site are very expensive to maintain, with no additional funding available.

#### **Item 5 – Chair's Update (oral)**

- 5.1 The Chair expressed her thanks to members of the Milverton School Association who had spent a considerable amount of time helping to tidy the school site at the weekend.

- 5.2 The Chair advised that, thanks to an application by the SENCO, Milverton was one of only 40 schools that had been accepted onto a project being run by Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) programme. This would entitle Milverton to 37 hours additional EP training support for all staff to improve their understanding of how to support neurodiverse children. The Chair shared a series of questions and proposed answers that needed to be submitted by the end of the week; governors were content with these and expressed their thanks to the SENCO for pulling the application together. The HT commented that the training would inform a significant part of next year's School Development Plan in relation to SEND and supporting leadership and management.

#### **Item 6 – Governor Services Update (paper)**

- 6.1 The Clerk drew governors' attention to information about the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 which requires schools to have effective plans in place to cover evacuation, invacuation and lockdown procedures. Schools must review existing emergency response plans through the lens of terrorism and serious violence to ensure their effectiveness and the HT, as the person responsible for protective security and preparedness, would do this. SJ, as Health and Safety link governor, would have oversight.

**ACTION: HT and SJ**

- 6.2 The Clerk advised governors that they could now access GovernorHub Knowledge which provides advice, information and training on a wide range of topics. The HT noted that governors would still need to do Somerset Safeguarding Training annually. EW advised that she would be undertaking level 3 safeguarding training on 21 June. Safeguarding training for 2025/26 would be delivered on the INSET day at school on Wednesday 3 September and governors were asked to attend.

**ACTION: Governors**

#### **Item 7 – Headteacher's Report (oral)**

- 7.1 The HT updated governors on the redundancy and restructuring programme and was pleased to report that had been possible to avoid any compulsory redundancies as a several members of staff were willing to restructure/reduce their contracted hours. However, budgetary constraints meant that it would not be possible to replace 3 members of support staff who had left the school or renew some fixed term contracts. From September TAs would have to focus on children with the greatest need, providing 1:1 support and delivering interventions, rather than be assigned to whole classes. Governors noted that the redundancy process should be handled by the HT, with support from HR, and that their involvement was limited to considering any appeals relating to how the process has been handled.
- 7.2 Governors noted that the newly appointed teacher is just completing her ECT year and was likely to teach in Reception next year. A further teacher had resigned and recruitment for their replacement would be taking place shortly.
- 7.3 Pupil numbers across the school had increased from 183 to 198. 30 children had applied to join Reception in September, only 18 of whom are in catchment.

Question: will increased class sizes, coupled with a reduction in TA capacity, impact quality of teaching learning?

Response (HT): several of our teachers already teach classes of 30 children, which is the standard class size for primary schools, although this can be increased slightly at KS2. Quality first teaching has the greatest impact on pupil progress. We will ensure that our youngest children always have a

second adult in the classroom. The more children we have on roll, the more funding we will receive which we can then be used to raise educational standards.

Question: how many of the 15 children joining this term have additional educational needs?

Response (HT): possibly one, but none with high level needs as children with an EHCP are unable to move schools without consulting the potential new school and County SEND team.

- 7.4 The HT advised that Somerset County had completely overhauled its educational support models for schools but full delivery of these was dependent on increased staffing levels. For example the Virtual School, which previously supported looked after children, had been extended to include other categories such as SEND and traveller children. The plan was also to have one person named as the professional to look after each individual child, regardless of which services they require, to provide more coherent support.

Question: how does this impact the core offer?

Response (HT): services have been stripped back due to the Council's financial difficulties. In addition, SENCOs have now been asked to submit funding applications for costed plans required to continue supporting EHCPs next year and this would be allocated on a first come first served basis. We will share this information with parents once we know what funding we will get. For the next financial year we will need to review the core offer to identify whether it provides value for money. Many schools join academies to obtain better support services at a lower cost. The HT commented that the HR service provided as part of the core offer is excellent.

- 7.5 The HT advised that the overall attendance figure continued to improve and was currently at 94.5% (93% last year). A number of children continued to be taken out of school for term time holidays and there were also a few children with persistently low attendance. Parents were reminded regularly of the consequences of taking children out of school for holidays and congratulated when their child's attendance improves.

Question: does a suspension count as an absence?

Response (HT): yes, as are things such medical appointments, lateness, religious holidays, sickness, but they are all coded differently.

- 7.6 The HT said she had attended a Parish Council recently and discussed ways of improving engagement between the school and local community. She also reported on a hugely successful visit by the year 4/5 choir to the Milverton Lunch Club where there had been lots of interaction between the children and adults; she hoped to repeat the event termly.

## **Item 8 – Safeguarding (oral)**

- 8.1 The HT advised that she would be updating the school's mobile phone policy to require school visitors to leave their mobile phones in the school office. The HT reported that a child on a part-time timetable had been given a series of suspensions and she had requested additional support from County to support the child, family and school but this had not been forthcoming.

## **Item 9 – School Development Plan Impact Review (paper)**

- 9.1 The HT highlighted the following updates to the School Development Plan:
- All subject leads were doing an audit on assessment to identify what works well and what could be improved. The focus on assessment would continue into next year to refine and adapt the process until it is as effective as possible.

- Work was ongoing to identify every point of knowledge that the children need to learn
- Work continued, with the support of a specialist adviser, to improve learning environments with a particular focus on pre-school and EYFS.
- Attendance was getting better with a particular improvement in children arriving at school on time.
- Training and discussions at staff meetings had taken place to promote a relational approach to behaviour and this had also been covered in newsletters to parents.
- Work to identify ways of improving children's mental health was ongoing
- British Values (Democracy, the Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect, and Tolerance of Different Faiths and Beliefs) were being woven into the whole curriculum and next half term these would be the subject of one assembly a week. The HT suggested that any governors visiting the school might talk to children about British Values and note down what they say.
- The new vision statement was now included at the top of the Friday Flyer but needed to be promoted more with the children and reflected in policies and decisions.
- The CPD programme continued to be developed, including the PINS project (see para 5.2) and this would support staff wellbeing. A Staff Wellbeing Charter was in development.

Question: how do you look after staff morale?

Response (HT): by communicating openly and honestly with people. It would be helpful if governors visiting the school would take time to chat to staff. I also want to review the leadership structure and sharing of responsibilities for next year.

#### **Item 10 – Governor Monitoring (papers)**

- 10.1 Governors noted the monitoring schedule and the Sustainability Monitoring Report. The Chair reminded governors of the need to complete their monitoring visits before the next Board meeting.

**ACTION: All**

#### **Item 11– Any Other Business**

- 11.1 **Governors approved the appointment of Rachel Ford to the Board as a co-opted governor.**

- 11.2 The Chair commented that her appointment was coming to an end in September and asked governors to consider over the next few months whether they would like her to continue in the role.

- 11.3 There was no other business and the meeting finished at 7.40pm.

Date of Next Meeting: 16 July 2025 at 6pm

Kathryn Lanning  
Clerk to Governors