



MILVERTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY AND PRE-SCHOOL

FGB MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday 26 March 2025, 18.00

Governors Present		In Attendance	
Linda Burton (Chair)	LA Governor	Gloria Hamlet (items 1-4)	Finance Officer
Clare Adams (from item 6)	Parent Governor	Kathryn Lanning	Clerk
Martin James (Vice-Chair)	Co-opted Governor		
Stephen Jones	Co-opted Governor		
Chris Mann	Co-opted Governor		
Stephen Penny	Staff Governor		
Nicola Stoddart	Headteacher		
Fiona Taylor	Co-opted Governor		
Gwil Wren (from item 4.3)	Co-opted Governor		

Item 1 – Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were accepted from Kieran Neale and Emily Weiss. Apologies for lateness were accepted from Clare Adams and Gwil Wren.
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda.

Item 2 – Minutes of previous meetings

- 2.1 The Board approved the minutes of the FGB meeting held on 29 January 2025 and the EGM held on 6 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 27 November 2024			
Para 7.3	Explain acronyms in future HT reports	HT	List of acronyms added to end of agenda; NGA Glossary of Terms uploaded to GovernorHub
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	

Para 3.1	Business Continuity Plan – upload to GovernorHub	Clerk	Done
Para 8.1	Board to see Safeguarding Audit and monitor the Action Plan	HT	26 March FGB - Audit on agenda; HT presented the Action Plan
Para 12.2	Further improvements to be made to school website	HT/MB	Ongoing
Para 13.1	Sexual Harassment – check if a stand-alone policy is needed	HT	Not needed but work underway to ensure all HR policies are compliant.
EGM held on 6 March 2025			
Para 2.3	Agree a date for Appeals Panel to meet 13-26 June if required	Panel	9.30am Monday 23 June agreed. HT will check HR adviser availability

Item 4 – Finance

a) Month 10 Finance Report (paper)

- 4.1 GH reported that the Month 10 report included a lot of detail from Month 11 and was now showing a 2024/25 year-end uncommitted surplus of £16,929 – a significant improvement on the £604 reported at the last FGB. The final carry forward figure could change if unforeseen costs or income materialise.

Question: are you still having problems recovering funds from LA cashiers?

Response (GH): we recovered a significant amount for Month 10 and are also trying to claim some funds from 2022/23 and 2023/24.

b) 2025/26 Budget Plan (paper)

- 4.2 GH confirmed that the school would need to set a deficit budget for 2025/26 and, having taken all possible measures to generate income and reduce costs, the draft budget for next year showed a deficit of £52,814. The Board would not be able to approve the budget until the LA had signed it off. A recovery plan would also need to be developed to eliminate the deficit over the next 5 years.

Question: this is a significant reduction on the figure reported to the last meeting – why is that?

Response (GH): because it now reflects redundancy measures agreed at the 6 March EGM and other cost saving measures.

Question: does the predicted deficit take into account redundancy payments?

Response (HT): these are covered by the LA for staff under the age of 55.

Gwil Wren joined the meeting at this point

- 4.3 It was hoped that the pre-school would run at a profit next year and a conservative estimate of £3,675 had been included in the budget plan. The school could also apply for a sustainability grant to offset any loss.

Question: does the pre-school budget include the increase in fees discussed at the last FGB meeting?

Response (GH): it does but income is dependent on filling spaces which is why we have made a conservative income estimate in the budget. We are currently doing a lot of work to promote the pre-school offer.

Question: what is the pre-school capacity?

Response (HT): we have 24 places and currently about 20 children but they attend for different sessions. About 18 of the current pre-school children will be joining our Reception class in September. At the moment we have 13 pre-school bookings for September but hopefully more will join over the course of the year.

Question: does the recovery plan need to show the deficit being repaid or is it just to get back to a surplus position?

Response (GH/HT): we have to pay it back and be in surplus which is why the recovery plan is spread over 5 years.

Question: what is plan B if the LA does not approve the budget but asks for further cuts?

Response (HT): the LA has said in conversations we have had with them that they can see we have taken all possible measures to reduce the budget deficit so they are unlikely to do this.

Question: what happens if an EHCP requires a pupil to have 1:1 support and you are unable to provide that?

Response (HT): the proposed staffing model for next year retains support staff for the children we currently have with EHCPs. The Tone Valley Partnership has proposed to the LA that an Alternative Provision hub is created at Cotford St Luke to support children with behaviour and SEN needs and provide economies of scale for local schools. If a new child with an EHCP wanted to join the school and we were unable to meet their needs, we would need to negotiate some additional funding from the LA.

4.4 Governors noted the draft budget for 2025/26 and that they would be asked to approve this at their next meeting, once it had been cleared by the LA.

Schools Financial Value Standard (paper)

4.5 The Board approved the 2024-25 SFVS form for submission to the Local Authority.

GH left the meeting at this point

Item 5 – Chair’s Update (oral)

- 5.1 The Chair said she was very impressed with the new school fencing. She also referred to a recent email to the HT regarding the potential for some funding from the PCC (Parochial Church Council) for the ‘enhancement of children’ but contact seemed to have been made instead with the PC (Parish Council). The HT would clarify this with the Office Manager. It was also suggested that the Milverton Trust be approached for funding.

ACTION: HT

Item 6 – Governor Services Update (paper)

- 6.1 The Board noted the update from Governor Services.

Item 7 – Headteacher’s Report (oral)

School data

- 7.1 At the request of governors the HT talked through the school summary statistics set out in her report.

Question: what periods of time/number of children are covered by the 52 exclusion sessions?

Response (HT): only 2 children with sessions ranging from 1 day to a week; both have a number of support services involved.

Question: are the parents of the 8.6% of children absent without leave for a holiday notified that they will be fined?

Response: yes they are, but children being taken out of school for holidays continues to be an issue. The number of children arriving on time for the school day has improved however, now that the gates are closed promptly at 8.50am. We do look for patterns with lateness to see if different categories of children are struggling to attend on time or if there are particular days of the week that cause issues.

Question: what is pupil premium?

Response (HT): this is additional funding of £2k per child to improve the educational outcomes of disadvantaged children. At Milverton the funding is used for things such as providing an ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) and forest school sessions which benefit all pupils.

Question: do teachers look at the autumn term attainment data and query whether the balance of time spent on core subjects is correct given that, for example, in year 1, 30% of children are below age-related expectations in reading and writing, but only 11% are below that level in maths?

Response (HT): the class teacher, HT and SENCO hold termly pupil progress meetings and review the data for each child. They review formal standardised assessment attainment tracked against national data, children's workbooks and teacher's professional judgements for each pupil. We also have comparative points at EYFS, Year 2 and Year 6 so check regularly to see if each child has achieved their expected progress and if we have added value.

Curriculum

- 7.2 As part of a curriculum update SP gave a presentation on history lesson planning using a year 3/4 term plan as an example. The plan set out the key concepts that the school wants to teach, the knowledge/skills to be developed, identifies key strands, how these will be delivered and what 3 key facts children should learn in each lesson.

Question: what are the benefits of using this format?

Response: it keeps teachers focused on what they are teaching and why and reduces the risk of being sidetracked.

Question: does this approach work for other subjects?

Response (SP): it works well for geography and possibly science, but not for core subjects or skills-based subjects such as Art or PE which require different assessment systems. The school's science lead is working with the LA Curriculum Lead to develop new and improved science assessments for use from next term

Question: who chose the current topic of Ancient Greece?

Response (SP): this is set by the National Curriculum, but there is some flexibility within each topic.

Question: how much autonomy does the class teacher have over when subjects are taught or is there a set timetable?

Response (SP): English and Maths are taught daily. Only 6 history lessons are taught each term and it is up to us how we deliver them but, rather than teach these in a block, it makes sense to spread them out so teachers can keep circling back to make sure children are retaining the 3 key facts they have learnt from each previous lesson.

Question: how much notice do schools get about curriculum changes?

Response (HT): we are currently working to the 2014 curriculum but when changes are made schools are given time to adapt. The whole curriculum for Milverton Primary School is set out on the school website.

- 7.3 The HT reminded governors of their responsibility to ensure that the school is compliant with IT filtering and monitoring standards to ensure that children are not accessing harmful content online.

Short training recorded webinars available here: [Filtering and Monitoring | SWGfl](#)

Safeguarding

- 7.4 The HT drew governors' attention to the decrease in the number of safeguarding concerns raised on My Concern. This was due to a reduction in the number of updates to existing concerns being treated as new concerns. A number of referrals had been made for new safeguarding concerns and the SENDCo and HT had both received training on Transform, a platform to improve information sharing across agencies. School volunteers had also received basic safeguarding awareness training. The HT had noted one incident of bullying in her report, but a further incident had taken place since the report was issued. Appropriate support measures were being put in place in line with the Anti-Bullying Policy, which would also be reviewed and refreshed.
- 7.5 Governors noted the full safeguarding audit (Appendix B) and that it had been submitted to the LA by the deadline. The HT gave a presentation on the Action Plan arising from the audit. Most actions had now been completed; outstanding actions included the following:
- Pre-school deputy – to be appointed
 - Volunteers – to receive safeguarding and associated training (almost complete with a small number yet to return their Prevent certificates)
 - Domestic Abuse Policy – to be written
 - Data protection – staff to receive training
 - Governor safer recruitment – governors to receive training

SEND

- 7.6 The HT advised governors that the County SEND Access To Inclusion Team was being dissolved at the end of March without any replacement service having yet been proposed. This meant that Somerset schools did not currently have access to Advisory Teachers, Communication or Autism Support and Removing Barriers to Learning consultations. The Access to Inclusion telephone line diverts calls to a Specialist Outreach Service which has currently halted its service due to payment issues with Somerset LA. Where outside agency involvement is a requirement of the EHCP application process this will make it difficult to access additional support and funding. The SENDCo is also undergoing Early Years training so she can support the pre-school.

Question: is there anything the school/local schools can do to advocate for the needs of SEND children?

Response (HT): I met recently with Somerset Partnership to look at collaborative ways of working, but a number of schools have left the partnership to join academies where they can get better access to resources and services than they can as maintained schools. I hope we can do more with the Tone Valley Partnership and share SEND resources with other schools.

Question: is it still the government's intention that all schools should eventually join an academy?

Response (HT): no, but schools would be wise to keep an open mind with regard to this given the reduction in LA support and limitations on the Core Offer.

- 7.7 Governors noted the SEND Register (Appendix C) and the SEND Update (Appendix D).

Staff Wellbeing

- 7.8 The HT outlined measures to improve staff wellbeing. An initial staff questionnaire at the start of the year had been followed up with supplementary questionnaires, particularly around communication and the issues raised were being addressed. Staff were no longer required to produce an interim progress report on each child in advance of parents' evenings which has helped to reduce their workload.

Question: how many reports are produced each year?

Response (HT): there are two face-to-face parents' evenings each academic year and one written report at the end of the year.

Parents and the Community

- 7.9 The HT advised that she had held a couple of coffee mornings this term for EYFS parents. She had also hoped to hold a parent forum to discuss the Relationship and Behaviour Policy but had little response; she would try to do this again next term. In response to parent requests staff were looking at extending pre-school hours to better fit with the school day.

School Vision Statement

- 7.10 The Board approved the school's new vision statement:**

Inspiring every child to achieve their full potential.

Nurturing our children to become resilient, respectful and responsible global citizens.

Item 8 – Governor Monitoring (papers)

- 8.1 The HT encouraged governors to let her know when they come in for monitoring visits so she can show them around the school, let them observe lessons and introduce them to staff and children. The Chair reminded governors of the need to carry out their governor monitoring visits.

- 8.2 The Chair reported on an informative monitoring meeting with the music lead.

Question: do you review the impact of external music teachers on children's learning?

Response (HT/SP): we have whole class ensemble tuition run by Somerset Music who teach instruments such as the recorder and ukelele and organise performances for parents and my experience has always been that those teachers are very good. We also have peripatetic music teachers, paid for by parents. Some of those children will be working towards grade exams which will give some measure of impact, but we could also ask parents for their feedback.

- 8.3 CM reported on a monitoring meeting with SJ and the HT on Key Priority 1 in the SDP focusing on assessment and improving learning environments.

- 8.4 CA reported on a second monitoring meeting with the SENDCo whom she found to be extremely enthusiastic, well-connected, proactive and dedicated. However, given her workload and responsibilities, she was also a single point of failure. CA and the SENDCo had started to discuss a list of questions that Ofsted might ask about SEND and they would continue working through these at future monitoring meetings, compiling evidence against each. CA felt the school was very nimble and creative in its approach to meeting children's needs within limited resources.

Item 9 – Policies (papers)

- 9.1 The clerk advised that she had restructured the policy schedule as follows:

- Section 1 – policies that schools must have and which must be approved by the FGB
- Section 2 – policies that schools must have but which the Board can delegate approval of to a committee, another governor or the HT.
- Section 3 – policies that schools are not required to have and which are mainly Milverton-specific.

Question: do governors still need to see policies the Board does not need to approve?

Response (HT): the vast majority are LA model policies, customised for the school, but we can develop a library of policies on GovernorHub so governors can access these.

ACTION: Clerk

9.2 The Board:

- a) **delegated approval of policies in Section 2 of the policy schedule (with the exception of staff appraisal, performance and capability policies) and Section 3 to the HT**
- b) **approved the Positive Relationship and Behaviour Policy including the Board's Behaviour Principles Statement**
- c) **approved the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy (noting that in future this could be approved by the HT)**
- d) **approved the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.**

Item 10 – Any Other Business

- 10.1 Governors commented on how comprehensive and informative the weekly newsletter (The Friday Flyer) is, illustrating the wide range of activities the children are involved in. They thanked Marian Barlow, the Office Manager, for pulling this together every week.
- 10.2 The HT advised that she was currently the main contact for Early Years and, despite being on sick leave, KS was supporting her in this.
- 10.3 The clerk reminded governors that there was still a vacancy on the Board for a co-opted governor and advised that parents could be considered for the role.
- 10.4 There was no other business and the meeting finished at 8pm.

Date of Next Meeting: 7 May 2025 at 6pm

Kathryn Lanning
Clerk to Governors