



**MILVERTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY AND PRE-SCHOOL
FGB MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday 27 November 2024, 18.00

Governors Present		In Attendance	
Linda Burton (Chair)	LA Governor	Gloria Hamlet (items 1-4)	Finance Officer
Clare Adams (item 4 onwards)	Parent Governor	Kathryn Lanning	Clerk
Martin James	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		
Emily Weiss	Co-opted Governor		
Gwil Wren	Co-opted Governor		

Item 1 – Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were accepted from Kieran Neale. Apologies for lateness were accepted from Clare Adams.
- 1.2 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 2 October 2024 subject to the following amendment at section 10.1:
(KP2) Improving behaviour for learning across the school underpinned by implementation of whole school relational practice was another area of focus identified by ~~Ofsted~~ SLT.

Item 3 – Matters Arising / Action Tracker (paper)

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

FGB Meeting held on 12 July 2023			
Para 5.4	Create Asset Management Plan template		MJ agreed to take this on
Para 16.2	Finalise Staff Appraisal Policy	HT	On agenda

FGB held on 17 July 2024			
Para 5.1	Update school's RSHE Policy once new DfE guidance issued	HT	DfE guidance not yet issued
Para 9.1	Publish an action plan for delivery of high-quality music provision	HT	This has been drafted; HT will ensure it is on the school website
FGB held on 2 October 2024			
Para 6.1	KCSIE: Governors to confirm on GovernorHub that they have read the whole document	All	SJ still to do
Para 8.2	Safeguarding training for Governors: confirm requirements	HT	Governors to update annually.
Para 8.3	Pay and Appraisal Committee to meet	Chair	Done (see 5.1 below)
Para 9.2	Code of Conduct: Governors to confirm on GovernorHub that they have read and accept	ALL	SJ, CM, GW still to do
Para 10.2	SDP: Share with governors	HT	On agenda
Para 11.2	Governor monitoring visits: prepare timetable	Chair	On agenda
Para 11.3	Governor monitoring visits: circulate sample questions	HT	To do
Para 12.2	End of Year deficit: check if this includes any of the items identified in the Premises and IT report	HT	Devolved Formula Capital Grant & Energy Efficiency Grant are separate funding streams and therefore not included in EoY deficit. The amounts queried e.g. Lighting, will be funded by grants.

Item 4 – Finance

a) Month 6 Finance Report

- 4.1 GH advised that the Month 6 report showed an estimated uncommitted revenue deficit of £26,569 and an in-year deficit of approximately £60k. £26k of the deficit was due to inaccurate forecasting for the pre-school, for example there had been a £10k shortfall in forecast income for last term. The HT advised that she and GH, with support from the County Early Years team, had been looking at how pre-school income estimates are made and exploring ways of ensuring pre-school billing and receipts are monitored more robustly. Somerset County is keen to keep early years settings in rural areas open even where they do not make a profit. **Governors agreed that the HT could apply for a £10k pre-school sustainability grant.**

Question: are there specific criteria on how the pre-school grant should be spent?

Response (HT): no, it is awarded to help make pre-school provision viable and successful.

Question: what age does the pre-school cover?

Response (HT): 2-4 year olds. Pre-school children can have 15 or 30 funded hours per week and the number of children receiving these hours has been overestimated so the school has not received as much income as expected. Some parents pay for additional hours.

Question: how many children do you have in the pre-school?

Response (HT): 30 on roll but around 20 at any one time.

Question: do you have unfilled places in pre-school?

Response (HT): yes, and we are exploring ways of filling these.

- 4.2 GH reminded governors that pupil funding is based on the number of pupils on roll at the previous year's October census. Funding for 2023/24 was based on 198 pupils, reflecting the October 2023 census, but the October 2024 census showed only 187 pupils on roll. This would impact the school's funding for 2024/25.
- 4.3 Other factors to note included higher than anticipated pay awards for teaching and support staff; energy costs rising; higher than anticipated cleaning costs; and overspend on reprographics.
- 4.4 The HT and GH advised that they were exploring the following to help offset the forecast deficit:
- Outstanding payments owed to the school for wrap around provision
 - Additional Higher Needs funding (not recognised in finance reports until confirmed)
 - The income and expenditure report may be over-inflated by up to £6k due to BromCom wrongly applying VAT
 - Outstanding payments due from the Virtual School
 - Repayment of a pupil's riding school place
 - Reviewing the service provided by Premier Sport for After School Clubs and teacher PPA cover
 - Recovering money paid by parents for After School Clubs which may currently still be with County and which their cashiers need to release.

Question: is the cost of After School Clubs covered by parents?

Response (HT): yes, but the PPA cover they provide is very expensive.

- 4.5 Governors noted the Month 6 Finance Report.

b) Finance Policy

- 4.6 GH advised that County had not yet produced a new model Finance Policy so she had proposed some minor amendments to the existing policy, primarily to update signatories and strengthen Lettings Policy conditions.

4.7 The Board:

- a) noted that some further amendments to signatories were needed, for example on page 21 (petty cash)**
- b) noted that 'items that benefit the pupils' should be amended to 'for the benefit of the pupils' (page 28 – how Unofficial Funds are spent)**
- c) approved the Finance Policy for 2024-25, subject to the above amendments being made**

Item 5 – Chair's Update (oral)

- 5.1 The Chair updated governors as follows:

- the Pay and Appraisal Committee had met on 23 October and approved pay recommendations for 2023/24.
- letting of the school's tennis court had generated £400 over the summer and there had not been any reports of vandalism or littering. It was hoped the arrangement could start again at Easter next year.

- John Jeffery, School Improvement Partner, met with the HT on 26.11.24 and agreed her targets for the current year.

Item 6 – Governor Services Update (paper)

6.1 The clerk drew the following items to governors' attention:

- Governance Boards should seek assurance that the school website is compliant with statutory guidance on what should be published online. GW agreed to do this and the Clerk would let him have a checklist.
ACTION: GW/Clerk
- Governors should ensure that their school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and should nominate a governor to liaise with a member of the SLT to confirm this.
ACTION: KN/SP
- The S175 annual safeguarding audit would be completed by the HT and EW (safeguarding link governor) for submission by the end of January. Ideally this should be approved by the full Board prior to submission so would be on the next Board agenda.
ACTION: HT/EW
- County had produced a new model pay policy to reflect the removal of performance related pay. The HT advised that staff would need to be consulted on this before it comes to the Board for approval.
ACTION: HT
- Boards were encouraged to appoint a sustainability link governor to promote the aims of the DfE's [Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy](#) Governors asked for further information on what the role would involve.
ACTION: Clerk

Item 7 – Headteacher's Report (paper)

7.1 The HT advised that she would produce a detailed written report for governors once a term and give an oral update at intervening meetings.

Question: why have changes been made to Higher Level Teaching Assistant hours?

Response (HT): during last year's redundancy exercise it was noted that for several years HLTA monthly pay had been topped up to reflect the fact that they were regularly asked to work overtime. This was removed from new contracts with effect from September 2024 but HLTAs can of course claim for any overtime they work. Unfortunately, HLTAs did not learn about the change until mid-September (Interim HT's final week) so are understandably unhappy. I understand HR advice was sought re contractual changes.

Question: could HLTAs to cover some of the PPA time currently covered by Premier Sport?

Response (HT): we will look into that.

7.2 Governors noted the very positive attainment data for the end of summer term 2024.

Question: why is year 2 reading of concern?

Response (HT): at 57% year 2 reading is very low and does not correspond to the cohort's writing ability which is higher (usually reading is higher than writing). We will need to analyse the assessments carefully and look at their year 1 data to find the reason for this.

Question: is the end of year attainment data broken down into categories such as age, gender, SEN?

Response (HT): the attainment data in my report is published data; we analyse data for each year group in greater detail in school. Governors will also have an opportunity to scrutinise attainment data at their next meeting.

- 7.3 Several governors asked if a list of acronym definitions could be attached to future HT reports.

ACTION: HT

- 7.4 Governors noted high levels of staff absence this term and the impact this was having on other staff.

Question: are absences covered internally? If not, who pays for cover?

Response (HT): it is not always possible to cover absences internally. For example, if a TA is supporting a high needs child, they can't be asked to cover another class.

Response (SP): we do have staff absence insurance which starts from day 1 for teaching staff, but from day 10 for support staff.

- 7.5 The HT advised that, to meet statutory requirements, the school day would be extended by 15 minutes and from 1 January would run from 8.50am – 3.20pm.

- 7.6 Governors welcomed the wide range of opportunities and external activities available to pupils. The HT asked governors to email her if they had any further questions about her report.

Item 8 – Safeguarding (see HT Report)

- 8.1 The HT advised that she had obtained support from the County safeguarding team to ensure the school is fully compliant. Actions taken included checks and updates to the Single Central Record; changes made to the way the safeguarding reporting system, MyConcern, is used; changes to the way children enter school from the school bus; and updates/training for staff. The HT stressed the need for all governors to undertake annual safeguarding training. The school's filtering and monitoring measures would be reviewed with the IT governor to ensure statutory compliance. Online safety was being promoted this term in a variety of ways.

Item 9 – SEND Register (paper)

- 9.1 Governors discussed the anonymised SEND register, noting that acronym definitions would also be useful here. The HT explained that the school currently has 32 children on the SEND register which categorises needs fall under Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning, Sensory and Physical, Social, Emotional and Mental Health. Some children fall into several categories. Six of the children on the SEND Register have an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) which attract varying amounts of funding.

Question: are any of the remaining 26 children on the SEND register likely to qualify for an EHCP?

Response (HT): children have to be at least 2 years behind their peers and have significant needs to be eligible. A further EHCP assessment is underway for an additional child. The process can take up to two years as it requires multi-agency involvement; funding is also paid retrospectively so schools have to meet the cost initially from their own budgets.

Item 10 – School Development Plan (paper)

- 10.1 The HT explained that the School Development Plan priorities were aligned with Ofsted priorities and governors agreed that they would monitor as follows:

- Quality of Education – Chris Mann, Stephen Jones
- Behaviour and Attendance – Clare Adams (SEND); Fiona Taylor (Attendance); Emily Weiss (Wellbeing)

- Leadership and Management – Martin James, Gwil Wren
- Early Years – Linda Burton

10.2 The Plan would cover three years (2024-27) and areas highlighted in grey were those where actions would extend beyond the current year. It was a live document which would be monitored and updated regularly, with impact reviews taking place every half term.

Item 11 – Governor Monitoring (paper)

11.1 Governors noted the Curriculum monitoring schedule and the Chair reminded them that discussions with subject leaders should be very light touch (10-15 minutes). A template for reporting back to the Board is available on GovernorHub - [Governor Visit Report Template](#)

Item 12 – Policies (papers)

12.1 **Governors approved the following policies:**

- **Attendance Policy**
- **Appraising Teacher Performance Policy**
- **Capability for Teachers Policy**
- **SEND Policy**
- **Whistleblowing Policy**

12.2 Governors noted that attendance rates had fallen since Covid and that the DfE was increasing fines for unauthorised absences. The HT advised that too many children were arriving at school late which has a detrimental impact on their learning and disrupts the learning of those children who had arrived on time. She would be looking at ways to encourage parents to get their children to school on time and introducing measures to improve car park arrangements.

Item 13 – Any Other Business

13.1 The Chair thanked the HT for her work to promote positive links between the school and the Milverton community which included giving a well-received presentation to the local Parish Council and taking children to a local Remembrance Day service. The Chair suggested that, when governors do their curriculum visits they should write a couple of sentences about what they were doing to be included in the Friday Flyer, along with a photo of themselves, and the Parish Newsletter.

13.2 The Chair advised that, in the interest of succession planning and developing governor skills, MJ had agreed to chair the next FGB meeting. Any other governors interested in doing similar should let the Chair know.

13.3 The HT thanked those governors who had supported the recent parent consultation evenings.

13.4 There was no other business and the meeting finished at 8pm.

Date of Next Meeting: 29 January 2025 at 6pm

Kathryn Lanning
Clerk to Governors