

**THE GOVERNING BODY OF MILL LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Governing Body held at the school at 2.30 pm on Tuesday, 30 April 2024.

**PRESENT**

Mrs A Iltaf (Chair), Miss C Barlow (Head Teacher), Mrs G Goalby, Ms C Prendergast, Mrs R Raja.

**In Attendance**

Mrs Z Poulter (Minute Clerk, Kirklees Governance Support Officer)  
Mrs M Debb (Kirklees Learning Partner)  
Ms K Waugh (Designate Governor)  
Mrs A Wilby (Deputy Head Teacher, Observer)

**114. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT & DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs H Rawat (consent), and Mrs C Winnett (consent).

There were no declarations of interest.

**115. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE RAISED UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items notified to be raised under any other business.

**116. REVIEW OF INDEPENDENT GOVERNANCE REPORT ACTION PLAN AND GOVERNANCE OBJECTIVES SETTING**

Introductions were provided for the benefit of Mrs Debb. Mrs Debb thanked the board for having invited her to join the meeting.

The Forrest Governance Report was tabled. This document had previously been circulated to all governors and the Clerk. A proposed annual planner document was also tabled.

The Chair explained that the purpose of the meeting was to review the Independent Governance Review Report and the associated Action Plan. There had been several changes to the governing board since the report had been received. The Chair highlighted that the board had been completing activities which contributed towards achievements of the objectives set out by the report and action plan. The board, however, had not yet finalised a formal set of governance objectives and a bespoke action plan. This was to be addressed in the meeting.

The Chair proposed that the board considered each of the points listed in the report's action plan in turn.

The board had met informally to discuss the recent changes, regroup, and develop as a team. This meeting had helped governors establish the needs of the board.

An action to develop a yearly plan for board business and agendas had resulted from the informal meeting. The lead priority for the board was to develop this document.

It was noted that the school bought into the Kirklees Governor Clerking Service, who provided agenda templates populated with standing items as requested, statutory items and suggested items. The board were keen to take more ownership of their annual planning and agendas for individual meetings.

The Chair reflected that although not committed to paper the board had identified three key governance priorities and objectives:

- Improvement of educational outcomes – monitored through governor visits and data review.
- Holding leaders to account – actioned through asking questions and governors being better prepared for meetings and more proactive.
- Safeguarding of pupils and staff – wellbeing would feed into this and monitored could be completed through survey data review.

The importance of formalising and documenting the objectives was raised. It was important that all governors could articulate these and how they contributed towards the realisation of the school's vision. Governors wished to review the school vision as this informed their objectives and linked directly to the School Development Plan.

The Head Teacher read the school vision aloud.

**ACTION:** To include the school vision on the top of each meeting agenda.

Governors contemplated the vision statement. They felt it continued to be applicable and relevant.

**RESOLVED:** That the governing board approve and accept the current School Vision.

Governors referred to the School Development Plan and the 8 development points within it.

*Mrs Waugh joined the meeting at this point.*

The first development point was attendance. Governors discussed that all governance objectives needed to be underpinned by a means of measuring progress and triangulation of evidence. In this case attendance data such as persistent absence figures would apply. This SDP development point would therefore link to the proposed governance objectives in, for example, pupil safeguarding through school monitoring of absent children. Governors would need to ensure that the school carried out the required monitoring to safeguard children and identify trends that could impact a child's educational progress and attainment.

Governors could refer to reports from external experts, such as Sarah Grant and Ian Richardson, to triangulate and seek validation to evidence the narrative and judgements provided by school leaders.

The Chair asked the board to consider whether they preferred to set broad objectives with clearly defined monitoring measures or very specific objectives. Governors were mindful that the objectives needed to remain strategic and not become operational. The board agreed to set broad objectives with clearly defined means of measuring progress towards these.

Governors identified several key words within the school vision and noted that the Forrest Governance Action Plan asked the board to identify 3 to 5 things that they wished to measure. Governors felt that the objectives discussed fulfilled this. By developing an annual planner specific to the board strategic monitoring plans could be drawn up to measure progress.

The 8 areas of the SDP were highlighted:

- Curriculum
- Assessment
- Oracy
- SEND
- Writing
- Attendance
- Review of governing body
- Support staff performance management

The Chair raised the importance of knowing that the board had people with the right skills, experience, and knowledge to support the achievement of the objectives and therefore the realisation of the school vision.

**RESOLVED:** That the governing board agree to set the following governance objectives:

- Improving educational outcomes
- Holding leaders to account
- Ensuring the Wellbeing and Safety of pupils, staff, and visitors
- Ensuring the governing body is effective in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities

**ACTION:** The Chair to draw up a document to capture the governance objectives and action plan.

The Chair explained that the board had created a governor visit proforma which helped governors to link visit questions directly to the SDP. A number of visits had taken place last term, however, this now needed to be built upon in line with the agreed visits schedule. All visits would be pre-arranged and intentional to coincide with key points in the year such as data drops.

Draft agendas were provided by the governor clerking service ahead of every meeting and these were pre-populated with standing and suggested items. The board intended to take additional ownership of meeting agendas and the work on the annual planner would again feed into this. There would continue to be a School Development Plan item on every agenda.

**ACTION:** GCS to add Review of Governance Objectives as a standing item.

As the board had now moved to the circle model of governance clear consideration on items previously covered by the former committees was required. Standards and Effectiveness items needed to show clear focus on data. Full board agendas would include finance items followed by S&E. The new agenda framework would be reviewed annually at the general meeting as required throughout the year.

It was suggested that the Chair and Head Teacher could meet regularly and as a Chair of Governors at another school, Ms Waugh recommended this and confirmed this helped her to remain current with developments at the school and support the Head Teacher's wellbeing. The Chair and Head Teacher agreed that these meetings would be valuable, and a running document of agreed actions and brief notes of the meetings would be kept for reference.

**ACTION:** Head Teacher and Chair to discuss a mutually convenient schedule of regular visits.

Ms Waugh raised that she had yet to be allocated an SDP governor focus. As her profession was in finance Miss Waugh was asked to lead on this area.

**RESOLVED:** That Ms Waugh be finance link governor.

It was noted that when the full appointment of Ms Waugh had been confirmed following satisfactory DBS the governance review action plan target to appoint a governor with financial expertise would be fulfilled. Ms Waugh planned to schedule a visit to the school following Mrs Ottewell's meeting with a fellow SBM to review finances.

The Head Teacher invited governors to request information and data they would like to be included in her reports. The Head Teacher highlighted that the school's data was complicated by ever changing small cohorts. Data would be accompanied by contextual information. It was agreed that the percentages of children at age related expectations and making good progress from their starting points would be provided. If and when children had not made good progress additional commentary would be supplied. The Head Teacher added, however, that good progress was challenging to calculate and there was an element of subjectivity to this.

Pupils at the school made good progress generally and data showed that there were areas in which the school excelled compared to the local Kirklees picture. Factors that were significant nationally, such as SEND children having lower attendance than non-SEND children, seemed not to be as significant at Mill Lane.

It was agreed that FFT and IDSR provided clear and understandable data formats. Governors were keen to monitor children's progress and compare pupils who appeared to be at a disadvantage to their peers to ensure they too made progress. Governors would consider the data of any vulnerable groups of children. Data would also allow governors to monitor the impact of interventions.

Where governors identified any data trends, vulnerable groups, lack of good progress etc. robust and challenging questions would be asked of school leaders to ascertain why. The board planned to continue to strengthen their questioning skills in meetings and during visits through training. They also understood the importance of asking follow up questions and requesting examples.

Governors remarked that they should question the origin of raw data. Answers by subject leaders to governor questions should track to research reports, for example, and align with external sources for validation. Governors should be able to identify credible and trustworthy sources and challenge the narrative provided by school to ensure it could be supported by evidence. Governors should also understand data in the local context of Kirklees and the wider national picture.

**RESOLVED:** That Mrs Raja be SEND link governor following Miss Prendergast's end of term of office.

Ms Waugh, as a financial professional fulfilled the action to appoint a governor with financial expertise.

Statutory policies had been identified and thus the action to do so and reduce governor workload had been completed.

A governor skills audit had addressed the action within the governance review.

The board continued to attempt to recruit an external governor. Since the review the board had grown, and attendance had improved significantly. Governors agreed with the Head Teacher that the board felt more cohesive and motivated.

**ACTION:** To defer succession planning discussions and review of governor role descriptors to September.

It was agreed that the action table be extracted from the review report and added to the boards newly formalised objectives. The new board governance action plan would be RAG rated with items coloured in as they were worked through and completed. The Chair felt it was important that the board's action plan should be in development ready to be discussed at the next informal meeting. Governors planned to review this regularly.

**ACTION:** GCS to add governor action plan log and a running log of governor CPD.

#### 117. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of any other business for discussion.

Mrs Debb thanked the board for having invited her to attend the meeting.

#### 118. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS FOR 2023/24 ACADEMIC YEAR

**RESOLVED:** That the next meeting of the Full Governing Body be held at the school, on Thursday 13 June 2024 at 4:00 pm.

#### 119. AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY

**RESOLVED:** That no part of the agenda, minutes or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the School, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

*The meeting closed at 3.38 pm.*

Minute No.	Action	Status
Minute 116.	<u>Review of Independent Governance Report Action Plan and Governance Objectives Setting</u>	New

	GCS to include the school vision on the top of each meeting agenda.	
<b>Minute 116.</b>	<u>Review of Independent Governance Report Action Plan and Governance Objectives Setting</u>  The Chair to draw up a document to capture the governance objectives and action plan.	New
<b>Minute 116.</b>	<u>Review of Independent Governance Report Action Plan and Governance Objectives Setting</u>  GCS to add Review of Governance Objectives as a standing item.	New
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<b>Minute 116.</b>	<u>Review of Independent Governance Report Action Plan and Governance Objectives Setting</u>  GCS to a running log of the governor action plan and CPD to each set of minutes.	New