

THE GOVERNING BODY OF MILL LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held at **05:00 pm** at the **School** on **Thursday, 18 January 2024**.

PRESENT

Miss C Barlow (Headteacher), Mrs G Goalby, Mrs A Iltaf, Ms C Prendergast, Mrs R Raja and Mrs H Rawat.

In Attendance

Mrs Z Poulter (Minute Clerk)
Mrs A Wilby (Deputy Headteacher)
Ms C Winnett (Designate)

48. ELECTION OF CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

The Clerk confirmed that Mrs L Kilroy had resigned from her position on the board leaving a Co-opted vacancy and a vacant Chair of Governors role.

The Clerk took the Chair and invited nominations. Mrs A Iltaf nominated herself and governors heard that she felt her knowledge of the school and its community would be of value to the board. She added that she felt her skills and experience would enable her to develop into the role and that she was dedicated to the school.

There were no further nominations. Mrs Iltaf left the meeting room to enable governors to discuss the nomination in private.

Governors were delighted that Mrs Iltaf had nominated herself for the position, were immensely grateful to her and had been impressed by her rationale. They agreed unanimously and without pause that they felt Mrs Iltaf was suited to the role and had shown commitment and dedication to the school. They acknowledged that due to circumstances the plan for succession could not be enacted and that there were no governors on the board with relevant chairing experience from which to learn. Nevertheless, governors felt that Mrs Iltaf was uniquely qualified, highly knowledgeable about the school and able to undertake training for the role on the job.

RESOLVED: That governors unanimously voted that Mrs Iltaf be Chair of Governors for the term of one-year.

Mrs Iltaf was invited back into the meeting where governors were pleased to inform her that she had been voted into the role of Chair of Governors.

The Headteacher raised that although the verbal feedback provided following an External Governance Review conducted by Kathryn Wilkinson of Forrest Governance had been positive the written Report felt contradictory. The Headteacher had requested that the Report be reviewed by Forrest Governance, and this was in progress. In the meantime, governors agreed that they would forge ahead with the verbal recommendations from Ms Wilkinson.

The Headteacher felt that the Report and its negative tone had directly contributed to Mrs Kilroy's decision to stand down from the board and that Mrs Kilroy had felt in some ways personally slighted by Ms Wilkinson's comments. Governors shared the Headteacher's sadness at the loss of Mrs Kilroy and wished to record their best wishes to her for the future and thanks for her time and service as governor and chair. It was with regret that Mrs Kilroy's decision was accepted although it was respected nonetheless by the Headteacher and board.

The Headteacher then informed the board that Mr Jones, due to personal commitments, was unable to attend meetings on a Thursday. Mr Jones had proposed that meetings be moved to a different day. This was, however, not possible for some governors and the decision was taken that meetings should continue to be held on Thursdays. Unfortunately, this meant Mr Jones would have to step down from the board leaving another Co-opted vacancy and a vacant Vice-Chair position.

49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Jones (consent).

Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs Mirza, however, governors reflected on previous discussions related to her repeated absence without apologies from meetings. The board decided that Mrs Mirza's apologies would not be accepted with consent. As such the Clerk advised that Mrs Mirza's historical absence meant that, in accordance with legislation, she would be disqualified from the board. The Clerk would contact Mrs Mirza to inform her of this.

There were no declarations of interest.

50. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT UP UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Policies
- Recommendations by the Complaints Committee

51. REPRESENTATION

(a) End of Term of Office

<u>Name</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>With Effect From</u>
Claire Prendergast	Elected Staff	18/05/2024

The Clerk had circulated the staff election procedure with the meeting agenda in advance of Ms Prendergast's ETO to ensure the board received sufficient time to organise a staff election.

(b) Governing Board Vacancies

Governors noted the following vacancies:

- (i) 1 x Co-opted seat to replace Mrs Linda Kilroy

With the assumed resignation of Mr Jones and the disqualification of Mrs Mirza the board would hold 3 Co-opted vacancies. The Clerk advised that she would raise this with Amerjit Sahota, Governor Clerking Service Manager, with a view to

providing assistance with recruitment. The Clerk was keen to support the new Chair of Governors and suggested that it may be possible to assist in finding a skilled governor with chairing or vice-chairing experience to provide guidance.

(ii) 1 x LA seat

Governors were pleased to hear that Miss Winnett's LA application had been approved and welcomed her to the board as a designate governor pending DBS.

RESOLVED: That the governing board formally acknowledge and approve Miss Winnett's successful LA application and agree to adopt her onto the board.

(iii) 2 x Parent seats

The Clerk had provided a copy of the parent election procedure in advance of the meeting. The school planned to draft an advertisement for the role of 1 parent governor as soon as possible with a view to holding an election shortly.

ACTION: Headteacher to email a skills audit to all governors.

52. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on **9 November 2023** be approved by the Chair as a correct record.

53. MATTERS ARISING

Actions:

(a) Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest (Minute 22 refers)

The Clerk had provided the Chair and Headteacher with Mrs Mirza's attendance record.

(b) Head Teacher's Report/Data Report and Governors' Questions (Minute 28 refers)

Governors would discuss the impact of the Learning Den later in the meeting.

(c) External Review of Governance Report and Action Plan – Kathryn Wilkinson (Minute 31 refers)

The Clerk had discussed recruitment with Amerjit Sahota, Manager of the GCS prior to the meeting. The Clerk had also advised the Headteacher and former Chair of Governors on the procedure for the election of parent governors.

(d) External Review of Governance Report and Action Plan – Kathryn Wilkinson (Minute 31 refers)

The Clerk had answered the Headteacher's enquiry regarding statutory policies, Miss Wilkinson had also forwarded a resource concerned with non/statutory policies.

Governors discussed the number of policies on the website and agreed that they wished parents and carers and others to be able to view any school policy they wished. Governors felt this provided transparency and openness for parents and carers.

RESOLVED: (i) That not only statutory policies be published to the school website.
 (ii) That only policies that the governing board have accountability for be brought to governors for scrutiny and approval.

ACTION: (i) Clerk to confirm policies the board have accountability for.
 (ii) Headteacher to circulate policies that governors are accountable for.

Q: How do you ensure that the website and policies are up to date?

A: There is an annual policy review by the Headteacher and records and documents are monitored regularly.

(e) Governing Body Development: Action and Priorities 2023-24 (Minute 41 refers)

The Headteacher had circulated a model for splitting the School Vision into its component parts with suggestions for monitoring and tracking prior to the meeting. It was noted that monitoring templates linked directly to core values.

(f) Any Other Business – Website Compliance (Minute 45 refers)

The Chair had circulated the website compliance audit spreadsheet to governors. This had been completed and all outstanding actions implemented. The audit would be reviewed annually in September. The Chair recommended that governors rotated responsibility for overseeing the annual audit as she had gained value insight into the school having completed the exercise.

(g) Dates of Future Meetings and Agenda Items

Monitoring visits and The Governance Core Functions and Strategic Action Plan had been added to the agenda. Governor visits would be scheduled later in the meeting.

53. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Governors had been provided with a copy of the draft minutes from the combined Resources and Standards and Effectiveness Committee meeting held on 9 November 2023 prior to the meeting.

Mrs Rawat had chaired the committee meeting held prior to today's full governors meeting in the absence of Mr Jones. Governors thanked her for her excellent execution of the duty of committee chair at short notice.

Mrs Rawat provided the following headlines from the meeting:

- The committee had approved the previous minutes.
- The SBM had circulated the Period 8 report prior to the meeting. There had been no large overspends.
- Benchmarking had been reviewed and it was noted that most funds were spent on staffing.
- The school budget remained balanced and a small surplus had been predicted by the end of the financial year.
- The SFVS had been discussed in detail with the SBM having provided answers to governor questions. The committee resolved to recommend that the SFVS was approved by the governing board and signed by the Chair of Governors.
- The curriculum update had been discussed and governors were informed that Oracy would now be included with a summative assessment at the end of each year.

Q: Why have you introduced oracy into the curriculum?

A: To help and develop children at risk of disadvantage in this area compared to their peers. The Renfrew assessment tool is in place to assess oracy, and this has been completed in Reception and Year 1. We have accessed some free resources through the Voice 21 initiative. As a school we need to acknowledge that there are children from diverse backgrounds. Staff will be correcting each other on the use of colloquialisms and we will be asking children to speak in full sentences in addition to modelling sentences for children to repeat.

The Headteacher added that children would also be asked to orally rehearse their planning for writing in front of their classmates. Sentence frames and sentence stems were already in use to help children develop their spoken language. The Headteacher expressed that oracy would develop over time and that she felt its introduction directly supported the school vision.

- The Committee had discussed SEN and were informed that the refinement of documentation systems, monitoring and progress reporting had begun. The school acknowledged children's progress and celebrated individuals.

Q: Why have you prioritised a programme of refinement?

A: To ensure that all pupils with SEN, who often do not make the same rate of progress as their non-SEN peers, are not at a disadvantage. This will help to develop SEN children's self-esteem and wellbeing and is why we have changed documents to support and report on this. We want the best outcomes for our SEN children and that includes not only academic achievement but robust emotional and social development. We will, in future, now be able to provide more data on the SEN children who have made good progress.

Q: What is Oracy assessed against?

A: Renfrew in the first instance and then the Voice 21 assessment progression. We will focus on linguistics initially.

54. HEADTEACHER'S REPORT AND GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS INCLUDING:

The Headteacher provided the following verbal summary of her report:

(a) Safeguarding

Governors were informed that a pupil had brought a replica gun, which had turned out to be a laser, into school. In close proximity the gun was clearly a toy, however, from a distance it could have mistaken for a real weapon. The Headteacher had taken advice from the Kirklees Legal Team and had discussed the matter with the child's parents. The Police had visited the school to speak to the class at the Headteacher's invitation. The Officer had outlined the seriousness of the situation and explained to the children that whenever there was a report of a potential firearm the Police would come armed. The LA planned to follow-up the matter and meet with the child's parents.

Every Thursday morning the staff met to take part in a Safeguarding briefing. The opportunity to discuss and share learning on Safeguarding matter was provided in each session.

Q: What is your new duty under KCSIE as the Headteacher?

A: The change in September 2023 gave the accountability for maintaining and securing firewalls to schools. The school firewall was discovered not to be secure and we were concerned that when we searched self-harm for example we were able to access

prohibited and inappropriate images and content. We immediately alerted Kirklees and our IT provider and the Smoothwall was changed straight away. IT support visited the school to conduct tests and although inappropriate searches have now been blocked if a child searched for self-harm, for example, they would be able to access sites that provided help and guidance. I will share the results at the next meeting.

Q: Is Safeguarding training for leads up to date?

A: Yes, apart from one staff member who is scheduled to update their training next week and will bring something to the Thursday meeting to reflect on.

Sarah Grant had visited to provide support with SEN. The graduated approach document from the LA had been reviewed by staff and the Headteacher.

(b) Behaviour

There had been no serious behaviour issues that were not linked to SEN children.

(c) Attendance Monitoring

School attendance levels, at 95.26%, were higher than the FFT at 94.4%, and government monitoring 94.7%.

Persistence Absence (PA) had been 15.29% compared to FFT and the national picture of 15%. 4 PA pupils had exited the PA list and the school figure was now 12.74%. Next week a further 3 pupils were expected to drop out of PA. Governors shared the Headteacher's delight in the figures, the attendance picture in school was excellent and the hard work that had been invested in this area was now paying dividends.

There were 167 pupils on roll, and this included an increase in numbers since November. There were no places available in Year 2, however, the school intended to apply to go over PAN as there were several children in the Learning Den.

Attainment results were outstanding, and Mill Lane were placed 8 out of 187 schools in Kirklees and 3rd in the area. Governors shared the Headteacher's pride in the results and were keen to publicise them.

Consultation continued for SEN places and the Headteacher felt that the needs of A prospective Year 4 pupil could not be met. Year 6 was full, and there were 22 pupils each in Years 5, 4 and 3. There were 21 pupils in Year 2, 19 in Year 1 and 16 in Reception.

There had been 40 applications for 2024-25 Reception places with 16 being first choices. The recent excellent results were thought to have increased the number of applications.

ACTION: Headteacher to write to Nurseries to extend invitations to prospective parents to visit the school.

Q: Is it possible that some of the children in the Learning Den may return to their classes fulltime?

A: That is always the aim and is something we need to consider in relation to potentially going over PAN. We have considered that we could have 34 children in each class if needed. Children in the den are making progress, but not necessarily to the level that would mean they move back into a mainstream class.

ACTION: Chair to share a link to the government guide 'Understanding your Data'.

Q: Could we as governors access the ASP?

A: Yes, this is where we obtain FFT.

ACTION: Headteacher to investigate governor access to ASP.

(c) Staffing

The Headteacher highlighted that Support staffing was stretched across school and particularly in KS2.

The caretaker intended to retire and therefore the role had been put out to advertisement.

55. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

(a) SFVS

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee the SFVS be approved and signed by the Chair.

(b) 2024-25 School Budget

Governors acknowledged the item and decided that the budget for next year would be discussed at a later meeting.

56. WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Governors agreed that mental Health and wellbeing were high on the national agenda at the moment and were of great importance to the school.

Q: What are you doing around mental health and wellbeing given that staffing capacity is stretched?

A: The wellbeing survey results were generally good. The results will be unpicked further in a couple of areas and the opinions of staff canvassed. We have established a weekly 30 minute session with the Headteacher for support staff. Initiatives such as the Wellbeing Warriors are in place in addition to having open and honest conversations with staff to support them and develop plans. With all this in mind we will as a school write our own wellbeing policy based in fact and practise.

Q: What would be your plan if you were concerned for the mental health and wellbeing of a member of staff ?

A: We would be very honest with them and make appropriate referrals to employee healthcare or their medical professional if needed. The advice and support I have received as a Headteacher in the past having made referrals was, unfortunately, poor. I would always continue to carry out my duty of care. We are flexible with staff who are experiencing personal issues and signpost them to any available help through the LA. As a school we are open and receptive to how people are feeling. We are a small school and we work closely together. This will be part of wellbeing warrior work and finding out what works and supports individuals best.

The Headteacher added that Senior Leaders met regularly to discuss workloads and capacity and the approach to this was described as realistic and resilient. The Headteacher asserted that she did not model working long hours outside of scheduled time to her staff.

In reference to pupil wellbeing governors were informed that staff carried out routine drop-ins and listened to pupil voice. All children were greeted twice in a morning by staff, once on entry to school and then again on arrival at class. Staff were attuned to the children, familiar with all families and the school were active in restorative practice. At the end of the school day the SEMH investing in me system actively supported pupils' wellbeing. The Headteacher reflected that the school cared about the children and celebrated their efforts, not just their achievements.

Q: Does the way in which children are supported change as they get older?

A: Yes, and we treat older children with the same frank and honest approach that we do with adults. We are conscious of the changes children experience as they get older and how this may be embarrassing for them. The most significant issue we have the moment with older children is the negative impact of social communication through mobiles phones outside of school. We address this in SEMH teaching and learning.

57. UNDERSTANDING YOUR SCHOOL'S PLANS FOR 2024 TESTS OR EXAMS

The Headteacher explained that the Year 6 cohort would take the annual SATs exams as planned. Governors would be invited into school to conduct routine security checks of test papers and ensure school were following procedure.

The school had chosen not to submit Year 2 SATs teacher assessments; however, these would be carried out.

58. MONITOR YOUR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SIP)

ACTION: To defer this item until governor monitoring visits had been carried out and reports submitted.

59. SELF-EVALUATION RECORD (SEF)

The Headteacher stated that the SEF had been updated slightly and published to the school website.

60. SCHOOL SUPPORT PLAN (SSP)

There had been no recent roundtable meetings and therefore the SSP had not been updated.

ACTION: Headteacher to share an updated SSP at the next meeting of the full governing body.

61. THE GOVERNANCE CORE FUNCTIONS AND STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN INCLUDING:

- Governing Board Development.

Following an external governance review Forrest Governance had been tasked with providing an amended action plan for the board. Pending this document governors decided to proceed with Ms Wilkinson's verbal recommendations which included the recruitment of additional external governors and the increased focus on holding the SLT to account through questions and challenge.

Governors agreed that they endorsed the school vision as it was and that they were happy to have wording to that added to the school website.

62. GOVERNOR TRAINING AND GOVERNOR VISITS

Mrs Rawat planned to meet with the SBM next week to review Safeguarding.

The Chair had circulated a table in December that mapped the number of governor visits and meetings agreed and required.

ACTION: Governors to email the Headteacher to select a relevant visit as per the visit table.

RESOLVED: That the following governor responsibilities be agreed:

- Safeguarding – Mrs Rawat
- SEN – Miss Prendergast
- Curriculum – Miss Winnett
- Attainment and Achievement - Mrs Iltaf
- SDP – Mrs Raja

Miss Prendergast had circulated training slides from a Preparing for Ofsted course led by Craig Batley that she had enjoyed and recommended.

63. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Autumn 1 Data

This had been circulated prior to the meeting, however, the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher would consider the data and produce a report to share at the next meeting of the full governing body. Governors considered the ways in which they should reflect on data and the information that they would find useful.

(b) Complaint Committee Recommendations

The Chair raised that she had sat on a complaint committee in the previous academic year. The committee had, in their decision letter, communicated some recommendations to the school. The Headteacher confirmed that these recommendations had been actioned.

It was noted that occasionally the school received donations of personal health products and that these were often given to children to take home. Governors raised concerns about the possibility that some children may have allergies. The Headteacher agreed that a letter would be sent to all parents and carers to request that they inform school that they do not wish their child to receive such products should the occasion arise.

It was brought to governors' attention that the Headteacher had recently been subjected to an instance of verbal abuse by a parent in front of other children. The Headteacher and parent had resolved the issue, however, governors were concerned for the wellbeing of the Headteacher, staff and pupils. The Headteacher explained that she had had little control over the situation other than to calmly talk to the parent for an extended period in her office.

64. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED: That future meetings of the full governing board be held starting at 5:00 pm, preceded by a meeting of the Combined Resources and S&E Committee starting at 4:00 pm, at the school as follows:

- Thursday, 14 March 2024 (changed from 7 March 2024)
- Thursday, 25 April 2024
- Thursday, 13 June 2024

65. AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY

RESOLVED: That no part of these minutes, agenda or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the School.

The meeting closed at 18:44.

ACTION LOG:

Minute	Action	By Whom
51	To email a skills audit to all governors.	Headteacher
53 (d)	(i) To confirm policies the board have accountability for. (ii) Headteacher to circulate policies that governors are accountable for.	GCS Headteacher
54 (b)	(i) To investigate governor access to ASP. (ii) To share a link to the government guide 'Understanding your Data'. (iii) To write to Nurseries to extend invitations to prospective parents to visit the school.	Headteacher Chair Headteacher
58	To defer SIP until governor monitoring visits have been carried out and reports submitted.	GCS
62	To email the Headteacher to select a relevant visit as per the visit table.	All Governors

ATTENDANCE AT FULL GOVERNORS' MEETINGS: September 2023 – July 2024

Governing Body Meetings	14.09.2023	09/11/2023	18/01/2024	07/03/2024	25/04/2024	13/06/2024	Total
Christine Barlow	✓	✓	✓				/6
Gayna Goalby	✓	✓	✓				/6
Anisa Iltaf	✓	✓	✓				/6
Paul Jones	✓	X (consent)	X (consent)				/6
Linda Kilroy	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2/2
Nasrin Mirza	X	X	X	N/A	N/A	N/A	0/3
Claire Prendergast	✓	✓	✓				/6

Rehana Raja	X	✓	✓				/6
Hawa Rawat	✓	✓	✓				/6
Cecilia Winnett	N/A	N/A	✓				/4
Parent - Vacancy	N/A	N/A					/6
Parent - Vacancy	N/A	N/A					/6

ATTENDANCE AT COMBINED COMMITTEE MEETINGS: September 2023 – July 2024

Resources and Standards & Effectiveness Combined Committee Meetings	09/11/2023	18/01/2024	07/03/2024	25/04/2024	13/06/2024	Total
Christine Barlow	✓	✓				/5
Gayna Goalby	✓	✓				/5
Paul Jones (Chair)	X (consent)	X (consent)	N/A	N/A	N/A	0/2
Linda Kilroy	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1/1
Claire Prendergast	✓	✓				/5
Hawa Rawat	X (consent)	✓				/5