

Taking effective Minutes



Plan for the session



- Introductions
- The purpose of minutes
- The 'essentials'
- Consider your audience
- 'Do's and don't's'
- Ofsted and inspection
- Case studies
- Top tips & phrases
- Reflections

Introductions



Why do we take minutes?



- They are a public record of a decision-making meeting which a) spends public money, b) delivers public education = requires transparency.
- A permanent record of the work of the LGC
- Evidence of LGC practice and inform Ofsted initial assessment
- A prompt to follow up actions
- Information for those who could not attend

The 'essentials'



- Name of the school, meeting, date, time and venue
- Name of attendees, their initials, and their role
- Apologies and the names of others who did not attend
- Declarations of interest and actions taken
- Approval of minutes
- Actions arising
- Summary of all items on the agenda and decisions made
- Date of next meeting
- Duration of meeting/end time
- Late arrivals/early departures



Consider your audience

- People who were not any the meeting
 - = easy to follow
 - = focus on decisions and how reached
- Parents
 - = easy to understand
- Auditors
- Ofsted
- Anyone! = consider wording carefully and whether items should be confidential/Part 2



- Include absolutely everything
- Record every question, focus on the CHALLENGING questions
- Use 'inflammatory language'
- Use Jargon/acronyms
- Record individual contributions (some exceptions)
- Record individual votes (unless requested)
- Use specific staff, pupil or parent/guardian names unless in confidential session



- Ofsted = look at effectiveness of LGC as a whole as a collective entity
- Recording points that demonstrate the LGC as a whole is carrying out its strategic duty
- Don't need to explicitly record each individual governor contribution or questions



- LGC is should be an open environment for discussion, governors should be able to raise unpopular points/own opinions without feeling restricted
- Elected governors are not representatives of the parents/staff and have the same roles as all other governors ie.don't need to demonstrate a particular contribution
- Once a decision is made, all governors are required to support it



Individual names are needed when...

- Recording a Declaration of Interest
- A governor explicitly wishes their dissent to be recorded
- Important to explain their role ie. the Safeguarding Lead Governor
- A specific action is attributed to an individual
- *‘...X will report back at the next meeting..’*
- Views of one governor are not held by the majority:
‘...whilst one governor felt this was not appropriate, the majority of governors were in agreement..’



- Record a clear resolution/action at the end of each item
 - ‘ *Resolution- To note the update/agree the revised policy* ’
 - ‘ *Action- X to provide examples to the next meeting* ’
- Summarise the discussion and challenge
- Be clear where the governors are providing challenge on performance, or if it is the Head reflected on performance
- Use bullet points or Q/A to cover detailed questions



- Use neutral language that is suitable for anyone to read
- Explain acronyms the first time they are used
'..the Head explained the allocation of Pupil Premium (PP)...'
- Consider splitting your agenda into Part 1 & Part 2 items
- Do a separate Part 2 minute for confidential discussion ie. commercially sensitive (eg. contract award) or information relating to individuals (eg. staff, parent or child)

Case Study – What do you observe?



- *Miss Brown reported on the SAT results for last year which were really low, and consequently she had concerns about Mr Archer's ability to teach the subject. Steve said they had always been a difficult class to teach and they were often misbehaving. The Chair reminded the meeting that the figures demonstrated a drop from 60% to 30%. Miss Brown said intervention was being used to support Year 5 children who struggled with maths and the Governors discussed whether to employ TAs and whether there was money in the budget for this. It was suggested to refer this to the Curriculum Committee.*

Case Study – What do you observe?



- *The Headteacher reported that the KS2 maths results were down this year. Governors noted this.*

Case Study – What do you observe?



- *63 lesson observations had been carried out during the current year, with the majority being good, 10% outstanding, and only 7% unsatisfactory. These were mostly in Y2 where children were being taught by and NQT. Extra support was being given to the teacher. The high number of good/outstanding lessons was surprising given the disappointing SAT results and an adviser was to be found to join the Head in lesson observations moving forward to provide an independent view of teaching quality*

Useful phrases



- *Governors discussed the merits of...*
- *The LGC sought further explanation from the Head on...*
- *Governors requested evidence/examples of...*
- *Key points in the discussion included...*
- *Concern was raised about...*
- *Governors sought reassurance that...*
- *In response to a question about X, it was confirmed that...*
- *The Headteacher advised that...*
- *Following questions, the Headteacher reflected that...*

Top Tips!



- Prepare a template in advance
- Spend most of the meeting LISTENING, not WRITING
- Don't be tempted to record the meeting on your laptop
- Do formal votes, or confirm your understanding of the discussion
- Write in the past tense
- Number pages and agenda items for ease of reference
- Re-read minutes the next day
- Double-check for inflammatory wording or confidential information. *Would you be happy for this to be in the frontpage of the newspaper?*
- Your minutes are a reflection of the professionalism at the school – *would you be happy with their presentation if you were a parent?*



- Signed by the Chair once agreed at the next meeting- electronically or in person
- Delete previous draft versions
- Do not have to have a hard copy, in which case **MUST** have online version easily accessible to anyone upon request (except confidential items)
- Most keep a version on school office/noticeboard
- Best practice- publish online
- Save on Sharepoint where central team can access

Thank you

