

ELM GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Extraordinary Full Governing Board Meeting
24th June 2020 6pm Virtual meeting



Present: Diana Boyd (Chair), Louise Willard (Head Teacher), Tammy Bowles, Leigh Ward, Laura Haynes-Copp, Phil Kelly, Chris McNeill, Emma Sutton, Hugh Mehta, Natalie Dodds and Sue Margolis

Quorate: 11/12

In attendance: Anna Johnson, Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

- i. There were apologies from Chris Adams.
- ii. Declarations of pecuniary interest in the business of the meeting – None

2. Minutes from last full board and committee meetings & Matters arising

The minutes of the full governing board meeting on the 21st May were approved.

Actions from FGB:

The Head explained that the groupings for Reception had only been confirmed in the previous week and so the content of the Chair's message to the families of next year's Reception children was no longer relevant.

3. Head Teacher's Briefing – Questions

Governors had received a revised risk assessment incorporating new government guidance on social distancing which had allowed the pod size to increase from 10 to 15 in each group of children. This had allowed the Head to proceed with giving every child some time at school before the end of term. Logistics meant that it could not be a full day but one half day session would allow children to celebrate the year and say good bye. This arrangement would require Year 6 to finish earlier in the day. The Head hoped that Year 6 parents would be understanding about this change which would allow children in other years some time in school before the year end.

The wider opening to Year 6 had gone smoothly and children were pleased to be back in school. Parents' feedback had been appreciative of the careful consideration that had been given to designing the wider reopening arrangements.

Q. Is the school at capacity under the current guidelines?

A. The Head confirmed that all available pupil spaces are full.

The Head explained that unless there were further changes to government guidelines over the summer it would not be possible to increase class sizes from 15 and therefore for children to return to school full time. The Head noted that guidance on sanitary procedures and cleaning were already well established amongst children and staff. If guidelines changed before the end of term the Head did not plan to review current arrangements in the interests of stability and governors supported this decision.

Governors emphasised the importance of communication with stakeholders even if the message was of uncertainty. Governors offered to give comments on any communications from the Head prior to sending to parents and carers.

Q. How are staffing levels being factored into planning for September?

A. Planning is being done on the assumption that all staff will be present.

The Head noted that Department of Education and union guidance on whether clinically vulnerable staff should stay at home was in contradiction and she had asked union representatives at the school if the unions planned to make changes.

Some staff who had been working from home had been reassured by observing how the school was operating following the return of Year 6 and had agreed to return to the classroom.

If there were staff who did not return in September it would require the use of agency staff entailing costs not in the budget forecast.

Q. Has the school contacted families of the Reception intake with plans?

A. Yes, play dates have been rearranged for September.

Vulnerable children and Key workers' children

The Head noted that attendance of this group had increased every week. 90 children had been identified as vulnerable and 13 were attending. The school was making weekly phone calls to families whose children were not attending and class teachers were contacting them through Class Dojo.

Use of the buildings

Q. If the alert level changes would the risk assessment be reviewed?

A. Following the change to social distancing guidelines the size of the pods was reviewed and amended in the risk assessment but it was unlikely that other areas would need to change.

Wellbeing and welfare of pupils, staff and stakeholders

The inclusion team was working on a project looking at supporting the wellbeing of staff and this would feed into an inset day on staff wellbeing next term. Consultation was taking place on what would be beneficial for all staff.

Q. Has the local authority offered any support on staff wellbeing?

A. They had put in place a headteacher wellbeing service with a range of support offered. Other staff have access to a consultation phone service.

Governors asked the Head to prioritise her own wellbeing and ensure she took time off over the summer.

Home Learning

The local authority had issued a statement on what could be expected by parents and carers in relation to home learning and a document on principles of best practice to support schools in home learning. A few parents had asked for live streamed lessons but this was not currently practical or safe.

There was now one member of staff overseeing home learning provision.

Class Dojo had been popular with staff and a useful platform for feedback and the school planned to continue using it in the next academic year. It allowed children to have contact with their peers in a safe context and reduced the feeling of isolation. Governors noted that having feedback on work had helped children to maintain their motivation working at home.

Trends in parent concerns and feedback

Parent feedback had been supportive of school decisions and how they had been communicated. The Head was concerned about the parent response to finishing Year 6's day early in order to enable class contact for other years.

Q. How is the school getting parent feedback on home learning provision?

A. Parents are using Class Dojo to communicate with class teachers about what is and isn't working well.

Governors discussed carrying out a parent questionnaire and decided that it would be more useful when schooling arrangements were more settled and responses could inform a known future.

The Head informed governors that a Year 3 teacher was currently absent and unable to complete school reports for their class. This is a statutory obligation and there was unfortunately no other staff member who knew the class. Due to the school closures data was not available to use as a basis for reports. All parents and carers have been phoned and the situation explained. It was proposed to provide an overview of what had been covered in the year and governors suggested that a section where children could report on their progress could be included.

4. Staffing Issues – budgetary approval needed

The Chair of the finance committee reported that the year start position was a predicted underspend of £78,785.

The Head explained that there was a concern re school office staffing capacity for the autumn term, with two staff currently off on long term absence. Val Gates, the School Business Manager had now returned full time to her role. In Val's absence a temporary staff member had supported school administration very competently, managing the new school meals voucher system and introducing other systems. When the two office staff members returned they would need some handover for these new systems. Therefore, the Head was proposing to continue to employ the temporary staff member either for the first half term or the whole of the autumn term. Administration staff absence is not covered by insurance and the cost for whole term would be £6,900.

Governors **agreed** that sufficient office support was essential for the smooth operation of the school as well as the Head's wellbeing and approved the expenditure.

5. Disadvantaged children

The Chair referred to the national focus on supporting disadvantaged children to overcome an increased attainment gap. Governors noted that a study by the Education Endowment Fund suggested that nearly 10 years of progress in narrowing the attainment gap in England between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates has probably been "wiped in a few months" due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Head explained that the catch up funding announced by the government was not prescriptive and the plan was to wait until September when staff could assess the best use of the funding. The school would also be able to identify newly disadvantaged children then.

Governors had received initial planning from the SEND team for support of children with special educational needs and disabilities.

	<p>The Head reported that staff were considering what pastoral, family and emotional support would be needed but it was difficult to predict what the effects of the lockdown would be on these children. Keyworkers of vulnerable children would be the main ‘tool’ in monitoring these children’s wellbeing. Governors commented that often providing the right type of learning contributed to children’s wellbeing.</p> <p>The National Governance Association had recommended that boards review the Pupil Premium plan of their school to reflect new support needs as a result of school closure. It was agreed that it was essential to evaluate outcomes of interventions or support provided. The Head explained that 6 children were being assessed using the Boxall profile in order to evaluate outcomes.</p> <p>Staff were assessing the needs of children currently attending the school and this would feed into a draft school development plan which would come to the final board meeting of the year.</p> <p>Action: Draft SDIP and Pupil Premium strategy to be added to agenda for July meeting. Action: Survey governors re new final meeting date of 20th July.</p> <p>The Head reported that the Free School Meal vouchers system was now working well.</p> <p>All children with an attached social worker had received laptops and children had been delighted when they were delivered by staff.</p> <p>Governors anticipated more resistance from school refusers on the return to school in the autumn.</p> <p>The Head explained that BHISS had reported that home learning had had positive outcomes for children with autistic spectrum condition.</p> <p>The government would continue with the Oak National Academy online learning service due to uncertainty about how schools would operate in the autumn term.</p> <p>Action: Head to collate positives observed from home learning and report on this at the next meeting.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Governors agreed amendments to the Child Protection addendum.</p> <p>The Head reported that there were fewer referrals than usual and this was a concern. A serious case review in relation to a family with children at Elm Grove was taking place in relation to an incident that had taken place out of school.</p> <p>Action: Head to bring Safeguarding report to final meeting.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Zoom parent consultation group</p> <p>Governors considered that in the current circumstances of frequent online meetings the interest might be low and agreed it would need a clear purpose to encourage engagement. They commended some of the creative communication the school had been using including videos and postcards and suggested that the school reach out to parents with more of this type of contact.</p>

8.	<p>Any other business</p> <p><i>Q. Is the school prepared if another spike in the virus occurred?</i></p> <p>A. It is forming part of the planning for September but many of the systems needed should that happen are now established and a school would be well prepared.</p> <p>Action: Next agenda to include how governance will be operated in the next year.</p> <p>Governors were informed that Governor Support training was now being offered online which could be found on BEEM.</p>
9.	<i>20th June tbc</i>

Chair's signature:

ACTION LOG				
	Date	Action	Owner	Due Date
1.	21.05.20	Chris Adams to write a letter to parents describing how vulnerable families were being supported by the school.	CA	01.06.20
2.	24.06.20	Draft SDIP and Pupil Premium strategy to be added to agenda for July meeting.	LW/AJ	10.07.20
3.	24.06.20	Survey governors re new final meeting date of 20 th July.	AJ	Asap
4.	24.06.20	Head to collate positives observed from home learning and report on this at the next meeting	LW	20.07.20
5.	24.06.20	Head to bring Safeguarding report to final meeting.	LW	20.07.20
6.	24.06.20	Next agenda to include how governance will be operated in the next year	AJ	10.07.20
Autumn Term 2020				
7.	14.01.20	Laura Haynes-Copp and Natalie Dodds would present an item on equalities at the next meeting.	LHC/N D	Deferred
8.	14.01.20	Governors to consider attending PTA events coming up, also Pupil Premium or SEND reviews via LW	All	Deferred
9.	04.03.20	Laura Haynes-Copp to send PTA dates to governors	LHC	Deferred
10.	04.03.20	Head to send dates of Pupil Premium and SEND reviews for next term	LW	Deferred
11.	04.03.20	Recommendations from the Safeguarding office review report which should be followed up at next meeting.	ND/AJ	Deferred