

ELM GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Extraordinary Full Governing Board Meeting
20th July 2020 6pm Virtual meeting



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

Quorate: 11/12

In attendance: Anna Johnson, Clerk

1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</p> <p>i. There were apologies from Leigh Ward ii. Declarations of pecuniary interest in the business of the meeting – None</p>
2.	<p>Minutes from last full board and committee meetings & matters arising</p> <p>The minutes of the full governing board meeting on the 24th June were approved.</p> <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <p>1. It was agreed that a description of how vulnerable families were being supported by the school would be incorporated into the governors' report to parents. Chris Adams volunteered to coordinate the report.</p> <p>4. Positive outcomes from the experience of home learning had been incorporated into the priorities of the draft school development plan by the Head.</p>
3.	<p>Head Teacher's Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Head reported that the school had received more emails from parents/carers requesting a place for their child on the key worker/vulnerable children programme because they are facing hardship due to the pandemic. These children were accommodated and this group is now operating at capacity. • Children had enjoyed and benefited from their sessions with their teacher in the previous week and attendance which was not compulsory had been high. The Head confirmed that the school was contacting the families of those children who had not attended the end of year sessions and had not been in contact. • Following a very positive response from staff and families to Class Dojo it had been decided that all online learning (if required) would be delivered on this platform. It would also be used for children to access homework in future. The great majority of parent feedback on online learning provision had continued to be supportive. <p><i>Q. Will a guide or relaunch of Class Dojo be provided as some parents had wanted more instruction on how to use it?</i> A. The staff will be having more training on using the programme and a guide will be sent to parents in the new academic year. The launch would aim to make Class Dojo as inclusive as possible.</p>

Governors commented that it would be good to encourage more children to sign up to the account level that enabled them to send messages and share their work.

Q. Will the school be able to monitor children's engagement with online learning if another lockdown takes place or a bubble has to quarantine?

A. Staff have already been using Class Dojo for monitoring engagement and reported back to the Head from the start. Children who are not accessing the online provision would be contacted both as a safeguarding precaution as well as to encourage learning.

Q. Have all children got access to the internet at home?

A. Those children with a social worker were given a laptop by the local authority which was greatly appreciated. There are some children with only a phone as access. However, the school will always provide paper packs as a backup.

Q. Has the number of vulnerable children attending school risen from 13 since June?

A. The number of vulnerable pupils varied from day to day and included different children on each day. The realistic overall number of disadvantaged children was regularly above 13.

Full reopening in September

The Head reported that the new risk assessment was still in draft form with organisation of lunchtimes needing to be added and there were questions that had not yet been answered by the local authority. The staff would be consulted on the new additions and it would then be circulated to the board. **Action**

The Head reported that it had been confirmed that planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) teachers would be able to swap pods to some extent.

Q. What will be the procedure if a child behaves in an unsafe way such as spitting?

A. Two children had been sent home during the summer term because they mixed with children from another pod. From September, the inclusion agenda will be in place again and sending children home would be an extreme measure. However, the wellbeing of all children and staff must be the school's priority. The behavior policy appendix would be updated prior to September.

The Head described the challenge of planning for the needs of children with SEND/EHCPs. Individual risk assessments had been completed for all of these children. Personal protective packs had been bought for use in specific situations rather than daily wear. The school expected to have virus test kits at the start of term.

Q. How will the Nest operate in the new term?

A. This is still being reviewed, taking into account that guidance allows that minimal groups can mix (it has been confirmed that this can happen in after school clubs and on school buses). The Inclusion Coordinator is logging which children are in each group attending the Nest to enable track and trace should it be needed.

Q. Is ventilation in the school adequate?

A. The site manager will open all windows at the start of the day and doors will be propped open. The Head noted that this presented a fire safety concern. Governors asked the Head to check whether the local authority sanctioned open fire doors in the interests of ventilation. **Action**

Contingency plans for online learning

The school would use the White Rose maths programme, Talk4Writing and Oak academy materials which the Head acknowledged would not be as personalised as the curriculum delivered at school. For individual children unable to attend, their learning would be worked out on an individual basis.

Attendance

From September it is Department of Education policy that all children are expected to attend school. The school plans to work with families to discover the barrier to attendance whether medical or anxiety about safety, rather than instigating fines.

Q. How will the school tackle persistent absentees?

A. The inclusion team is already working with families of children who have been absent for non-medical reasons. The Head confirmed that not all of these children had been accessing online learning on Class Dojo.

The Head explained that recent attendance at end of year sessions was a positive indicator for attendance in September.

School Workforce – deployment, workload and wellbeing

The Head had completed 31 individual risk assessments for staff members and all staff had returned to work, except two who had a GP's sick note. Some staff had come in to school to do preparation work and had found this helpful to get used to being back in school.

As identified previously, staff sickness absence would be a challenge as it would not be possible to move staff around pods to provide cover.

Q. How will staff wellbeing be gauged?

A. The Head had discussed this with the union representatives, who had commented that continuing to operate the staff wellbeing group would be helpful for this. In addition, a staff survey could be carried out in September.

Extra-curricular activities

These would not be running in September and the situation would be reviewed after October half term. The Year 6 trip had been cancelled and families refunded, while the Year 4 trip had been postponed to April and May 2021.

Curriculum and delivery

The management team had identified four key areas for a 'recovery curriculum' in the autumn term:

- Safety
- Community
- Relationships and wellbeing
- Learning: this will aim to reengage children who may begin school with low resilience/stamina and poor concentration, so shorter lessons are planned. Learning to learn will be a focus and baseline assessments will be carried out early in the year to identify where key concepts are missing.

	<p>The amount of Covid funding for catch up for each school had still not been confirmed by the Department of Education.</p> <p>Staff are concerned about the government’s decision to proceed with Phonics testing in 2020 and SATs testing in 2021. This will be a distraction from helping children to overcome emotional and learning challenges following school closure. The group ‘More than a score’ is campaigning to change government policy on testing in the next year. Teachers will be obliged to focus on working for tests and this could only be ignored in the unlikely event of a unilateral decision by schools to boycott the tests.</p> <p>Governors suggested that a school decision not to spend time working for these tests could be justified within a risk assessment which could be shown in the event of an Ofsted inspection. The Head noted that Elm Grove is under additional pressure in relation to SATs because of the results of the 2019 cohort affected by the high proportion of SEND children.</p> <p>Governors agreed that they supported the Head on whatever decision she reached in relation to the Phonics testing.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Draft School Development and Improvement Plan</p> <p>The Head had carried out a review of the 2019-20 plan highlighting those actions that had not been completed, many of which will be carried forward. The Autumn term recovery curriculum will inform part of the 2020-21 SDIP and the actions relating to the foundation subjects will be resumed after the Autumn Term.</p> <p><i>Q. Is there a focus on the old SDIP in the recovery curriculum?</i> A. Yes, primarily in relation to reading. Maths and English will be the focus in the mornings, with the broader curriculum taught in the afternoons. It is unfortunate that same day interventions which were proving to be a successful strategy cannot continue in the new year, as these were delivered during assemblies which will not be taking place.</p> <p>Staff are identifying the core skills/knowledge that children need to know to progress onwards.</p> <p>Governors advised the Head not to dedicate too much time in the summer to writing a new SDIP as it was still so uncertain what the next year would present.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Pupil Premium (PP) strategy</p> <p>Phil Kelly (PP link) and the Head had met and discussed catch up funding, the implications for resourcing and staff in supporting PP children and absenteeism (all discussed earlier in the meeting).</p> <p>It was expected that for some children the achievement gap would have widened and also that the number of children falling into PP category would have increased.</p> <p><i>Q. Is the school encouraging these families to come forward for free school meals so that the school can receive PP funding?</i> A. School Ping messages have been sent and some parents have applied. This would be repeated and the Head commented that the process is more user friendly than formerly.</p>

	<p>The Head reported that Caterlink had generously offered to provide free meals to staff and children until the end of term.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Governors received the annual Safeguarding Report from the Head and a visit report from the Safeguarding link Natalie Dodds, who had met the Head with the Chair of Governors.</p> <p>The visit had focused on discrepancies in the single central record with inconsistency in date format one of the issues identified. The Head and Elsa in the school office were learning how to complete Disclosure Barring Checks. Along with James Waring, they now had access to the safeguarding drive so that all safeguarding processes would continue in absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.</p> <p>Annual Safeguarding Report</p> <p>The Head explained that Operation Encompass was the name of an initiative whereby if police were called to a house where children were present, the school would be informed within 24 hours. This allowed staff to be sensitive to any behavioural changes and support these children.</p> <p>There had been 23 notifications under the scheme and the Head reported that staff had found it helpful and reported it had made a very positive difference.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>Appointments and committee structures</p> <p>It was agreed that it was important to reestablish separate Finance and Staffing and Appraisal committees in the new academic year.</p> <p>The Teaching and Learning committee would be incorporated into the full board meetings. Previously TLS meetings had often involved staff presenting on their specialisms and it would be difficult to continue with this at FGB due to time constraints. Governors would need to consider how monitoring and evaluation would take place in the absence of visits.</p> <p>Diana Boyd to draft board structure and distribute to all for comment. Governors would contact Diana if they wanted to change roles. Action</p> <p>It was agreed that stakeholder engagement of parents and staff must be continued as a focus of the board. A new governor link should be appointed as Hugh Mehta would step down from this role.</p> <p>Emma Sutton would step down from the Finance committee but continue to report on Health and Safety to the FGB. Diana Boyd would join the Finance committee.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Head Teacher Appraisal committee would continue with the same members and Chris Adams would sit in on these meetings to develop knowledge of this area.</p> <p>Governors agreed to appoint Diana Boyd for another term as co-opted governor from September 16th 2020.</p>

	<p>Diana Boyd was nominated for the position of Chair of Governors and duly appointed. Chris Adams was nominated as Vice Chair and was duly appointed.</p> <p>The Chair and the Head would agree meeting dates and distribute as soon as possible. Action</p> <p>A board self-evaluation survey would be sent out before first meeting of autumn term. Clerk to draft and send to Chair. Action</p> <p>Governors to send reports to Chris Adams for incorporation into annual governors' report. Action</p>
8.	<p>Staffing Career breaks - discuss and decide whether to adopt LA principles.</p> <p>It was explained that a member of staff had needed to step down for the next year for Covid related reasons but wanted assurance that they could return. The local authority has a Career Break Principles procedure which school governing boards can decide to adopt. An urgent decision had been necessary and the Chair supported the Head in offering a career break arrangement to the member of staff. The principles offered preferential consideration ahead of external candidates should the staff member want to return but did not guarantee a job.</p> <p>The Head recommended that the board adopt the principles and this was agreed.</p>
9.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Budget reports – Hugh Mehta, Chair of Finance</p> <p>The initial forecast was for a £78,000 underspend but the annual pay rise had not been included. Although this was still in negotiation, Schools Finance had recommended that this be added to the budget at 3% increase. This produced a £20,000 deficit at year end. However, based on previous years there was good reasons to be optimistic that a balance would be achieved by the School Business Manager and Head's management of costs over the year.</p> <p>It was agreed that a Finance committee meeting should be arranged for early in the autumn term.</p> <p>SEND Link, Laura Haynes- Copp</p> <p>Laura had had three phone meetings with the SENCo who would be taking maternity leave from January 2021. Laura would report to the board following the next meeting in the autumn.</p> <p><i>The meeting ended at 8pm</i></p>

Chair's signature:

ACTIONS OVERLEAF

ACTION LOG				
	Date	Action	Owner	Due Date
1.	20.07.20	Head to circulate new risk assessment when complete	LW	01.09.20
2.	20.07.20	Head to check whether the local authority sanctioned open fire doors in the interests of ventilation	LW	Asap
3.	20.07.20	Diana Boyd to draft board structure and distribute to all for comment. Governors would contact Diana if they wanted to change roles	DB All	01.09.20
4.	20.07.20	The Chair and the Head would agree meeting dates and distribute as soon as possible.	DB/LW	Asap
5.	20.07.20	A board self-evaluation survey would be sent out before first meeting of autumn term. Clerk to draft and send to Chair.	AJ	Asap
6.	20.07.20	Governors to send reports to Chris Adams for incorporation into annual governors' report.	All	Asap
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