



The Primary Local Board of the Hesse Academy

Minutes of the Meeting of the Primary Local Board.
Penshurst Primary School.
Monday 13 July 2020 at 5pm



PRESENT:

Dr R White (Chairperson, RW); Mr M Duncan (MD), Mrs A Fordham (AF), Miss L Hatfield (LH), Mrs J Spencer (Headteacher, JS)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr V Groak (HT Hesse Academy, VG), Mrs G Stafford (Clerk to the Trust, GS).

Throughout these minutes a question is indicated by Q followed by the initials of the questioner and a comment is marked by C.

33 WELCOME

RW welcomed everyone to the fourth and final meeting of the academic year. The meeting was held on MS Teams due to the pandemic.

34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest for this meeting were declared.

35 APOLOGIES

Mrs S Brodie, Mrs J Woodford and Mrs R Potter.

Resolved: Consent was given to the absence of the above governors.

36 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (14 May 2020)

Resolved: That the minutes of the joint meeting with Hesse High LGB held on 14 May be confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair, RW.

37 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

37a ACTION: MP to present PPS Theme to Middle Leaders at HHS – action carried forward

37b ACTION: Punctuality data to include FS1 and totals to show whole school performance - action carried forward

37c ACTION: JS to look into rewarding punctuality and perhaps offer free places at Breakfast Club for pupils that give rise to concern – action carried forward

37d ACTION: Governors to continue to use the Governor Visits Form and to use the Safeguarding Audit whenever they come into school – ongoing

37e ACTION: JS to implement the revised Nursery times from September 2020 FS1 –action carried forward

37f ACTION: GS to contact MD to assist with access to the Learning Link – complete

37g ACTION: Please could all Governors read the Child Protection and Safeguarding Addendum - complete

38 HEADTEACHER UPDATE

38a Safeguarding our learners on and off the premises

- Weekly contact is made with all vulnerable children (LAC, DA, SEN and Safeguarding concerns) with any concerns logged on CPOMS
- Increase in number of vulnerable children seen this half term
- Core group meetings conducted on Google Teams

Q: (RW) How have you ensured children and families were aware of the importance of being safe online during lockdown?

JS: We sent out leaflets about online safety at the beginning of the lockdown, it is also a standard message on the updates.

VG: I wrote a Headteacher's update daily and every fortnight I reminded of this.

C: (JS) We have heard of problems with not treating other social media platforms appropriately.

Q: (AF) At the last meeting you said there were some families you couldn't contact – have you now managed to contact 100%?

JS: We have not managed to make contact with three families so have involved social services. They were not of concern before, but we had to refer this on.

VG: It may be as simple as families choosing to move in with extended family at the beginning of lockdown.

Q: (AF) How much longer are you having to wait for referrals?

JS: I think things are progressing quicker than normal. We now have three more Children in Need or on Child Protection, so our total has gone up to six.

Q: (MD) How do you feel safeguarding has gone during this period?

JS: I am pleased we have opened up to more year groups as we now have more vulnerable children back. All bar one vulnerable child is back.

VG: We would have welcomed the flexibility to choose who could return as Years 2-5 have missed out.

38b Attendance at School

- 185 pupils currently attending – this is capacity at classes under 15
- 46% of these are key worker children or vulnerable
- Key worker children attend Monday to Friday. Returning year groups attend Monday to Thursday

Q: (RW) Have you been able to invite all the vulnerable children in the other year groups back into school?

JS: Yes – all but one.

Q: (RW) Is there a difference in how the children were in March and how they are now?

JS: The vulnerable children have more worrying symptoms. They need intervention as their problems are now magnified. They are nervous and very anxious.

C: (RW) This is critical - we need to make the children are happy first then they can start learning.

Q: (RW) Has it been difficult for children to adjust to working in small groups?

JS: Children from 3 years old up love sitting at their own desk and having their own space.

VG: I agree. Across the school most children, despite some having a horrible time, are happy at school. Very few need extensive support.

Q: (MD) Is there additional funding available for catch up?

VG: There is Government funding and when we know about the amount we can locate more resource.

38c Health and Well- Being of Learners and staff

- One parent has tested positive
- Not aware of any staff infected
- Lessons are being recorded and uploaded to Google classroom
- Weekly messages from SLT and story time recorded
- Staff set work daily on Google Classroom
- Staff are in touch with each other using technology – online meetings, quizzes and group planning lessons.

38d Learner education during the crisis

- Google Classroom offers same lessons as those taught in school
- If motivation drops, activities that are more fun are introduced
- Videos have been recorded for new to school FS1 and FS2 pupils to replace the stay and play sessions and parent inductions.
- Teachers are available to answer any questions between 9am and 3pm
- Positive feedback has been received from parents and staff

Q: (RW) What percentage of children would you say are engaging with home-learning?

JS: At the beginning all. Over the last 2 weeks engagement has declined to about 50%. We have spoken to the parents and they are struggling with the motivation now. They have done a sterling job. Of the 60-70 in a year group 20 have done the work day in day out, 20 have done a lot and 20-30 are now not engaged.

Q: (RW) Have we received the Government laptops for disadvantaged children?

JS: Four have been delivered today.

C: (VG) We cannot reconcile the number received against the number we applied for, as the numbers are different. We actually have more than we applied for. I think there is little point issuing them now. We will assess the need in September and issue. We only received those 10 days ago despite ordering them in April.

JS: The ones for children with social needs or LAC have gone out.

Q: (RW) What home-learning provision has there been for those without IT access?

JS: Five families said that they did not have access in March and so we made packs of work for them. As the weeks went on more and more said that they didn't have access so more packs were prepared. We need to look at IT access for September.

C: (RW) The DfE guidance says that all children should have immediate access to home-learning whether due to partial-school closure or family isolation.

Q: (AF) I appreciate this is a challenge. How many laptops/ Chromebooks did you get?

VG: 32 across the school but we don't know how many are for the High School and how many for Penshurst, so we will allocate according to need.

38e Plan for full return in September

- Plans are being developed to manage the return of all pupils from September
- Measures will include staggered drop off, separate entrances, staggered breaks, hot lunch meals boxed and provided in classrooms, packed lunches in classrooms and a one way system around school
- Attendance will be compulsory

C: (VG) All the measures that are currently used are in a risk assessment document. They were formed by the Leadership Team, Facilities Team and our LA Health and Safety Adviser. This will be reviewed and then the staff will receive a standard operating procedure on 14 August. The risk assessment document goes to Trade union officials via TCAT.

C: (JS) The fact that staff can move between bubbles is popular with staff as teachers can prepare to set classes a little. Catch up can be more directed.

C: (RW) The advantage of having almost 200 pupils attending PPS during the partial-closure is that you have effectively had a long dummy run of working within these control measures.

Q: (MD) Does the current plan include all children returning in September?

JS: Yes, apart from a short staggered period for FS1 and FS2 as normally happens.

Q: (MD) How will you run assemblies?

JS: We are already doing this remotely and will continue to do so for now.

Q: (RW) How do you plan to engage effectively with parents? We need to be confident that they are on board with following the Public Health guidelines and that they understand that they must inform school if their child is symptomatic or if their family is self-isolating. How are you going to ensure that families understand the need to report any illness honestly and the importance of being tested in the event of displaying Covid symptoms? At the same time, how will you reassure parents/carers that it is safe for children to attend school and that this is expected?

VG: We have communicated all the way through partial-closure with parents. We will send a very detailed letter to parents mid -August outlining the plan for their children. Feedback from parents has been good but this is now about communicating the right message that attendance will be compulsory from September. We cannot be ambiguous, as non-attendance will lead to learning gaps increasing even more. There is a fine line between being supportive and being very clear on our expectations. Public Health England have been very clear that unless there is a confirmed case children must attend. We will be clear and remind parents at first and if necessary issue formal letters from week 3.

C: (JDS) Induction Day on 8 September will help with getting this message across. Year groups will return each hour. I will go through the expectations, and walk parents and children through the systems and the children will meet their new teacher. The responsibility of being tested if ill will be outlined in the letter to parents.

Q: (GS) Do you intend to start up Breakfast Club and after school clubs in September?

JS: Breakfast Club is a provision to help our disadvantaged pupils. This will start on day one. We will introduce a booking system so that we know exactly how many will be coming so we can staff correctly. An advantage of having Breakfast Club is that it ensures children are in school on time. Staff are keen to start after school clubs not least as for some essential workers this wrap around care is essential. However, there will be a delayed start to this provision so that we can plan this carefully ensuring the safety of everyone.

Staffing

- Ambiguity over guidance regarding who is vulnerable so TUs are asking for clarity
- Shielding expected to be relaxed 1 August
- Pregnant staff will not be able to come on site – they will be engaged in other ways
- May need to recruit more staff to cover pregnant members of staff
- Group meetings can take place if social distancing is observed. Meetings for Emotional well-being Coordinator and the SENCo for example will take place

Remote Education

- If there is a local lockdown then plans must be in place to offer a quality and consistent education

- Blended learning approach would be used – a combination of Google Classroom and live lessons
- PPS staff have not had blended learning training yet

Q: (RW) DfE guidance states that any remote teaching has to be high quality, sequenced i.e. classroom teaching at home. This would have to be provided even to one child if they are self – isolating. How will you ensure the quality of teaching that teachers are delivering?

JS: I can see what learning is set and drop into Google Classroom to quality check delivery. I have been doing this during the partial closure.

VG: This is one area where I think we could have been more ahead than we were. There has been no primary or secondary live lessons and blended learning started with Sixth Form teachers. Because we were all working together I think this actually slowed us down. There is resistance from TUs as teaching has to be voluntary at this time but we are able to provide much resource without compelling our staff to do this. TUs see that there has to be some provision for learning remotely.

C: (JS) Agreed –there is no resistance from staff, we just need the training. It would be possible for one teacher from each year group to undertake all the online live teaching for that particular lesson.

C: (RW) I would think that it was preferable for children to access live teaching by Penshurst staff rather than use other remote providers such as National Oak Academy. This way children are still having the Penshurst Curriculum and taught by teachers they know.

Q: (RW) The five families that have reported they have no IT access – how will you meet their needs as they clearly wouldn't be able to access Google Classroom?

VG: We would issue them with Chromebooks.

Recovery

- Assistant Head focussing on mindfulness
- Children will be “triaged” on entry
- Support will be given
- Focus on getting to know the children again

Q: (RW) I'm not sure whether you are actively referring to the return to school as the “Recovery Phase”. However, following a NGA webinar I watched, I wanted to ask how you are planning to monitor and address well-being as all children return to school in the autumn?

C: (JS) Penshurst already is very focused on this – health and well-being is a focus each morning as part of circle time. In terms of learning content, we are very reluctant to scale back the curriculum as our experience with the children that have returned is they just want to get on and learn.

C: (RW) Children need the broad and balanced curriculum to keep them engaged. The DfE have also stressed the importance of maintaining broad and balanced.

Q: (MD) What will be the provision for school trips next year?

VG: We think that day trips will be able to continue but not overnight stays.

JS: The problem with trips lower down the school is that the ratio of staff needed is so high that it would remove many staff away from the school so there will certainly be a delay on restarting any trips.

C: (RW) I think you may also need to consider that some families could be facing additional financial difficulties which may make it increasingly difficult for them to make the voluntary contributions towards trips. The costs of these could be prohibitive.

C: (RW) You have all done a fabulous job and need to ensure you get a good break over summer. Thank you on behalf of all governors for all your hard work.

C: (JS) Thank you. Staff have also appreciated the thank you message that RW posted on You Tube for them.

39 2020/21 Meeting Dates

The meetings will be held as follows: (all 5pm start)

Thursday 22 October 2020

Thursday 10 December 2020

Thursday 18 March 2021

Thursday 20 May 2021

Thursday 15 July 2021

40 GOVERNOR TRAINING AND SUPPORT

GS informed Governors that the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance has been released but does not come into effect until September. Governors therefore have ample time to read this and a link to the guidance will be issued with the minutes. Governors were asked to pay particular attention to Part 2, which outlines the Governing Board's responsibility to safeguarding.

ACTION: GS to circulate a link to KCSiE 2020 with the minutes.

41 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thurs 22 October 2020, 5pm

42 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Local Board Roles

RW informed the Board that she intends to step down from the role of Chair in the autumn term and would like governors to consider taking on extra responsibilities from September. The reason for this is the distance from home to school and she feels she can no longer commit to the time required to be an effective Chair. She intends to stay on as a governor for the autumn and spring terms.

The Chair, Vice Chair and SEND Link roles will be appointed at the next meeting.

C: (JS) Thank you – you have been amazing; you have been so supportive and effective in your Chair and SEND Link role.

C: (AF) Thank you Rachel. It has been lovely to work with you and we really appreciate all you have done.

ACTION: RW and AF to write an end of year letter for parents/carers.

43 AGREED ACTION POINTS

43a ACTION: MP to present PPS Theme to Middle Leaders at HHS – action carried forward

43b ACTION: Punctuality data to include FS1 and totals to show whole school performance - action carried forward

- 43c ACTION: JS to look into rewarding punctuality and perhaps offer free places at Breakfast Club for pupils that give rise to concern – action carried forward**
- 43d ACTION: Governors to continue to use the Governor Visits Form and to use the Safeguarding Audit whenever they come into school – ongoing**
- 43e ACTION: JS to implement the revised Nursery times from September 2020 FS1 –action carried forward**
- 43f ACTION: GS to circulate a link to KCSiE 2020 with the minutes (minute 40)**
- 43g ACTION: RW and AF to write an end of year letter for parents/carers (minute 42)**

The meeting closed at 6.10pm.