

**Hoyle Court Primary School Governing Board
Minutes of the Extraordinary Full Board Meeting
Held on 17 June 2020**

The meeting commenced at 6:06pm.

Present: Val Sherred (Chair), Judy Walton (JW), Simon Kemp (SK), Tim Phillips (Head), Ros Sheridan (RS), Adrian Metcalfe (AM)

In Attendance: Nageena Khan - Clerk to Governors

Welcome and Introductions

Chair introduced the meeting and welcomed all.

Apologies for Absence and their Acceptance

Apologies were received from DP, these were accepted. The meeting was quorate.

Wider School Reopening

A staff meeting was held last Thursday to share plans with staff for a wider reopening of school, looking at staggered timings for arrival, bubbles of fifteen and collection of pupils as well as reviewing policies. Staff were a little apprehensive about reopening but were also keen to have children back in school. Head had a number of conversations individually with concerned staff and they felt reassured. A wider school opening commenced on Monday 15 June 2020 and went smoothly.

Q: Chair- Were any staff reticent with the plans?

Head reported that two teachers were concerned about bubble sizes of fifteen so these were reduced to eleven. The staff members were very grateful for this change.

Q: Chair-What about responses from parents?

Overall it has been very positive; Head received some emails from parents at the end on Monday but there were no major concerns.

There were seven additional children across school at the end of last week and in order to avoid pupils and staff mixing, the same teacher and LSA will remain with the same bubble of children throughout the day. There will always be two staff members in a bubble to ensure health and safety and offer support to each other. Children are doing extremely well socially distancing around school and in classes.

Q: SK- is there any sense from children that they find the set up challenging?

Head reported that children are coping well, they do not seem upset or anxious, although it is different to see children sitting apart in classrooms. He will ask staff for feedback at the end of this week.

Q: JW- what about the vulnerable children that are not in school? Do you have contact with them?

Head informed that the PPSM contacts these children weekly. There are currently four vulnerable children allocated a social worker and two of these children have not returned to school in agreement with the social worker. The PPSM has at least one weekly contact with these children.

The majority (two thirds) of children still remain at home and parents expect some form of home learning to continue. End of year reports are being written and planning for next year is taking place so teachers are currently very busy. Head has reiterated the expectation for teachers to maintain contact via email and Twitter with the 'at home' parents. There have not been any negative comments received from parents but it is important not to be complacent.

Signed.....

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Action

Clerk joined at 6:30pm.

Head hopes to have all pupils returning to school in September 2020, however alternative solutions to home learning need to be explored as all pupils may not be able to return for a while.

Q: Chair- are other colleagues going along similar lines?

Q: RS- have you thought about video lessons? I know some private schools are doing this and they work really well.

Head reported that very few schools are delivering video lessons due to capacity. Most schools are setting tasks on a daily basis and pupils complete work and upload it to a central portal. Hoyle Court teachers and parents use email communication; if a teacher or parent wants individual feedback this can be provided via email or phone. Technology in education has moved on rapidly in the last three months with a number of companies introducing software.

Q: SK- the government is planning to reduce the 2m rule. That is not going to make a huge difference to schools is it?

Head explained that reducing to 1m social distancing will not be practical in a school setting. The advisory bodies to the government and unions have asked for clarity around this.

Q: SK- Whilst offering some possibilities and doing things differently in September regarding technology, I am still wary about things being offered to us. I'm sure you'll talk to colleagues to find out what they are doing. I think if all pupils cannot return in September you may get a different reaction from parents and it might be worth talking to them about possible solutions as not all children will have access to the same level of technology. What are your thoughts on this?

Head replied that if it transpires in the next few weeks that schools need to prepare for some form of home learning in September, he will carry out an online questionnaire in order to gauge parental opinions and explore options. No school has opened up direct email links between parents and teachers

Chair added that parental input is important; If guidance states that social distancing is reduced to 1m parents might be more cautious. Due to the time frame, the announcement tomorrow will be the one that schools will have to adhere to ready for September 2020.

Q: AM- as a parent, as the weeks have gone by I have found it harder and harder to motivate my child to do work. We need to put the emphasis back on teachers. If we are just sending out a blanket piece of learning it won't be as productive. If we can differentiate it will really help, otherwise we will have children choosing what they like and what they don't like. I don't think the communication via emails to teachers has been as effective. With my child a different teacher is now sending work home. Some parents are saying their children feel cut off and left out and they need to have more targeted learning. I have a few friends who are primary school teachers and they are regularly checking up on how individual pupils are doing. Can we look at this?

RS reported that both she and her husband are working full time and she spends a lot of time finding resources online for her children to use. Due to her own workload she does not have the capacity to set work, so her children are learning but it is not always linked to the work sent home. She mentioned Seesaw; an online platform that allows teachers and pupils to provide effective home learning. Pupils are expected to logon and register each day, complete the work set by the teacher and then receive feedback on work. Getting detailed feedback from the teacher is valuable. Her children have received differentiated work however there seems to be an inconsistency with this across school, with some teachers differentiating and others not.

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Q: AM- some of the homework is a completely different method to how we have been taught. If teachers are able to include the answers that would make parents more likely to do some of the work rather than being faced with a barrier. Could we look at this?

Head thanked governors for their useful feedback. He explained that capacity has been challenging, especially since a greater number of children have returned to school. Personalising work is difficult for each child however marking work and writing supportive comments are important, and he will ask teachers to do this. He will also ask them to forward information on technical vocabulary as well as the different methods.

Head informed that using portals to facilitate learning requires the teacher to be present at their screen for 3-4 hours a day. If the closure had not happened so quickly this could have been set up and most schools like Hoyle Court had to set up a home learning system with one week's notice. Looking forward to September, if home learning is still going to take place then alternative options need to be explored. This is also the ever present fear of a second wave, so some children that are vulnerable may not be returning and the school will need to think about how to approach this. AM suggested for the school to trial some of the online learning options by the end of the academic year. **Head to explore this further.**

Head

Budget

Chair reported that an adjustment was made for the SENCO role being two days a week rather than three and the impact of this. Since the last Board meeting, some further spend is required for non-core curriculum subjects; a total of £5k for curriculum resources. This does reduce the balance, however the Carry Forward remains positive for the third year. All schools have an extension for submitting the budget by 30 June 2020.

Head explained that the focus for Ofsted is now much greater on foundation subjects. These have been lower down the priority list and there has been underinvestment in these subjects in terms of resources. JW informed that she reviewed the revised CFR and was happy with it.

Apprenticeships- this was discussed at the F&GP Committee meeting in January 2020 and Head is keen to explore this. He explained that the SBM and Office Manager are nearing retirement and plans for succession need to be looked at. During lockdown some staff members have been carrying out different roles to their usual role in school and one of the Admin Assistants has been working with children and thoroughly enjoyed herself and would like to return to the classroom. Head therefore propose for the Admin Assistant to return to the class as a LSA and the school takes on an admin/accountancy apprentice who in the first year would be trained as an Admin Assistant, with the opportunity to train up as an office manager in the second year. In third year they would start to look at finance and HR administration, eventually being trained up to SBM level. Another apprentice would then be appointed to train up to Office Manager level. An apprentice is paid a minimum wage, costing the school approximately £8k per year.

In terms of succession planning the apprentices would be trained up to use Hoyle Court systems mentored by the SBM. Having an additional LSA in the classroom will be extremely beneficial.

PPA internal cover- Head shared plans for next year.

Q: JW- do these apprentices go to college?

Head replied yes, schools that have used the apprentice scheme are strong advocates for it, however it is about choosing the right person. This is a great opportunity for young people

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who will be trained up and will receive a formal qualification at the end. If the scheme is not working effectively this can be terminated.

Q: AM- we use the apprentice scheme at my work place and the issue we have is we train people up and they then decide to leave at the end of the programme. It only works well when there is a really well structured and clear road map.

JW stated that she fully supports what AM said, but equally feels that this is a great opportunity for young people.

Head noted AM's comments. He will be looking to appoint someone who is committed and realises that this is a real opportunity. By end of 18 month plan another apprentice will be appointed as the first one progresses. For someone to have the possibility of being a business manager after three years is a fantastic opportunity.

Q: JW- How will we transition the Admin role to a LSA in terms of equal opportunities and HR?

Head reported that he sought HR advice on this; the role can be advertised internally and a restructure is not required. The Admin Assistant has previously carried out the LSA role for over ten years.

SK commented that the proposal is good for school and sends a positive message to the community.

Q: VS- do you want to explore this or wait until the F&GPC on 10 July?

Head explained that if the school starts to explore this now, something could be set up for October 2020 or January 2021. He will be seeking to work with the apprenticeship body to make sure the successful candidate is right for Hoyle Court.

Q: VS- will you or the SBM need to be on the interview panel? How does it work?

Head plans to be on the interview panel.

The Board approved the changes to the budget and this will be submitted to School Funding.

SBM

Date of Next Meeting- Thursday 16 July 2020 at 6:30pm

As there was no further business Chair thanked all for attending and the meeting closed at 7:27pm.

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