

**Local Governing Body Meeting
Monday 22nd June 2020 at 4.00pm (Virtual)
Minutes**

Present:

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| Matt Whitehead | Executive Headteacher |
| Beverley Burrows | Headteacher |
| Lee Jamieson | (Chair) Co-opted Governor |
| Mike Gallagher | Co-opted Governor |
| Debbie Bradley | Staff Governor |
| Gemma Davenport | Co-opted Governor |
| Rev A Stanton | Foundation Governor |
| Sam Collins | Parent Governor |
| Kate Dean | Foundation Governor |

Apologies:

None

In attendance

Danielle Wood Clerk

Any text in red bold italics represents a Governor question (Q); challenge (C); Governor and/or clerk support (S). Black bold upright represents decisions and actions.

The meeting convened at 4:05pm

1. Welcome, Introductions & Opening Prayer

- Governors were welcomed to the meeting by Mr L Jamieson. The opening prayer was led by Rev A Stanton.

2. Apologies for Absence

- There were no apologies for absence received as all governors were present.

3. Declaration of Non/Pecuniary Interest

- There were no declarations made.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting held 4th March 2020

The Minutes of the previous Meeting held 4th March 2020 were approved as a true and accurate record.

5. Note and accept of the Core Group minutes as distributed to Governors with specific reference to their school

The Chair explained that Core Group meetings had been held weekly and recently moved to fortnightly. Additional meetings were held if new guidance was received which needed board consideration.

Minutes from Core Group meetings had been uploaded to GovernorHub and governors confirmed that they had received these and commented positively about the detailed risk assessment completed.

Governors thanked the Headteacher and Chair for attending the virtual meetings held.

Q – Are there any schools within the Trust which are a similar size to St Elisabeth's and face similar challenges during this period? In terms of school size, St Wilfrid's is the most comparable, however some of the issues faced at St Elisabeth's are unique to the school setting. The classroom sizes at St Elisabeth's are smaller than other schools in the trust and therefore the classroom bubble sizes are smaller.

Mr Whitehead commented that the work the school has undertaken to accommodate the children during this time is incredible.

The Headteacher reported that there was currently six key worker bubbles, and proceeded to explain which classrooms were being used around school to accommodate these. Governors heard that the local authority has provided details of a tiered approach for the school to follow when starting to accept additional children.

There was currently twelve year 6 children expected to return, and this has allowed the school the opportunity to welcome some year 1 children back.

The Headteacher explained the possible challenges the school would face with prioritising children who are eligible to return to school. Mr Whitehead added that thankfully St Elisabeth's has not faced this issue yet.

Mr Whitehead advised that the Department of Education issues updated guidance each day and the recent guidance suggests that primary schools do not have to follow the 2 meter social distancing rules and therefore the risk assessments in place will need to be reviewed. Governors were advised that another school in the Trust wrote to advise parents that children would not be observing social distancing when working in their bubbles. Parents could then decide if they were happy for their child to attend.

Q – How have other schools in the Trust managed the demand for school places and restrictions of bubble sizes? Each school in the Trust has faced their own challenges and responded in the way that they deem suitable for their setting.

The School Business Manager highlighted the challenges the school faces as an increasing number of parents are expected to return to work and as they are not classed as key workers their children are not eligible to return to school.

The Headteacher stated that children of key workers remain a priority at the school, the guidance sent from the local authority provides a list of key workers for the school to refer to. Some key worker children attend for a couple of days and therefore other children can attend on the other days in the same bubble.

The Headteacher reported that the school has received a lot of positive feedback from parents who feel reassured by the provisions the school has put in place.

Mr Whitehead referred back to the School Business Managers comment about the challenges faced with parents returning to work who are not eligible for a place at school, and stated that the DfE guidance does not include any rights for these children to return to school and whilst this will be followed the school will always try and help families where possible.

Q – Have we calculated how many more children we would be able to welcome back if the government changes the social distancing rules from 2 meters to 1 meter? The classrooms would need to be measured again to check as they are currently set up with tables 2 meters apart. It would be approximately 50% more children.

6. Approve the Appendices relating to Covid-19 arrangements to the:

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **The Behaviour Policy**

The above policies had been circulated to governors ahead of the meeting and were APPROVED by the governing board.

7. Approve the Risk Assessments made in respect of:

- **Provision for Key Worker and Vulnerable Children attendance**
- **Re admittance of designated Year Groups in line with DfE advice (N,R,Y1 & Y6)**

Governors discussed the Risk Assessment for the re-opening of the school and acknowledged the challenges faced by the staff. The document was duly APPROVED by the governing board.

8. Headteacher Report

The Headteacher's Report had been circulated to the governors prior to the meeting and questions were invited.

- **Premises and Health & Safety**

Mr D Brazil, CSS Officer, had visited the school and reviewed the Health and Safety measures which would be put in place. These were listed and the Headteacher explained that the risk assessment is regularly reviewed. The Headteacher read aloud the list of provisions put in place at the school.

General Health and Safety management had continued around school, with a Health and Safety walk taking place on 19th June 2020. A review of the emergency lighting had taken place, governors were reminded of the issues with the smoking fuse on 1st November 2019 and how the emergency lighting was found to be less effective than expected. Fortnightly checks continue to take place on the lighting and battery packs, with the work to update expected to cost between £8,000 and £10,000. There would be an option to pay this in instalments.

An electrical bid had been made to fund the rewiring of the whole school.

- **Progress with the plan to readmit children to school (designated year groups) including current pupil numbers and learning provision**

This was discussed in detail earlier in the meeting. Governors noted that the number of children attending school had significantly increased.

The Headteacher referred to information included in her report regarding the provisions in place to support families eligible for Free School Meals.

- Remote learning arrangements Y2 – Y5

The Headteacher read aloud the update included in her report.

Governors heard that the school continues to support families who are unable to access the online learning resources.

- Safeguarding and vulnerable children including provision for children with EHCP's

The Headteacher referred to the information included about the support the school continues to provide to vulnerable families.

Information about Operation Encompass was circulated to governors ahead of the meeting and the Headteacher explained that schools require two people to be trained in school however due to lockdown only Mrs A Lancashire had attended the training. The school had been advised that they can proceed.

Governors AGREED that the school be a part of Operation Encompass and the Headteacher and Chair agreed to sign the commitment document. A letter would be sent to all families and a notification would be added for parents on the school website.

Q – Who instigated the schools involvement with Operation Encompass? The Local Authority contacted the school, it is a national initiative.

- Pupil and staff well-being

The Headteacher reported that key worker children were happy to be in school and that they were enjoying the activities.

Governors heard that members of staff shared their anxieties about reopening school to more children and after an open discussion they now feel more secure.

Q – Have any members of staff tested positive for Covid-19? No, some members of staff and children have self-isolated however this has only been a precautionary measure.

A governor commented that from a parents point of view individual families would weigh up the risks of their child returning to school and some will decide to keep their child at home for their own personal reasons.

Q – Has the school been able to access any government funding to purchase laptops or other technology for families who do not have access? The school has not been eligible to receive any laptops from the schemes in place however the school has purchased laptops for families eligible to receive the Pupil Premium Plus Grant.

The school has maintained contact with social workers and exercise books have been left in the entrance hall for families to collect to support with home learning. The school was also printing work for any families that request this.

Mr Whitehead explained that his understanding of the laptop scheme was that each local authority would be allocated a certain number of laptops to be allocated to year 10

students who do not have access to technology. He added that the government had announced that any expenses schools incur as a result of covid-19 would be funded, however there has been no further information regarding this.

Q – Has the level of engagement for home learning been sustained throughout?

The Headteacher advised that she is aware of the challenges families face with home learning and contact has been maintained with families who are struggling with the offer of support.

Teaching Assistants were currently preparing phonics packs to be distributed to all reception children to support them in year 1.

The Headteacher explained that Mrs Millen was overseeing assessment and pupil premium children and had attended a meeting regarding pupil premium plus expenditure.

Governors were updated on the number of children who currently have Educational Healthcare Plans (EHCP) and any applications which were currently being processed.

- Staffing update and staffing for Academic Year 2020-2021
- Preparations for September and outline recovery plans to readmit children to school (dependant on further guidance)

The Headteacher reported that there was currently 294 children on roll and 303 children expected to be on roll in September. The school has the capacity for 340 children therefore places are available.

The Headteacher updated governors on the curriculum.

New guidelines for PSHE come into effect in September and the school has everything in place to deliver this including resources.

The Headteacher reported that Mrs Millen and Mrs Lancashire have worked hard producing curriculum overviews for years 1 to 6. It was identified that some areas of the curriculum have previously been missed or not taught in full and therefore the overviews will support with ensuring full curriculum coverage.

Governors heard that members of staff are completing medium term lesson plans and therefore they will not be required to complete weekly plans in September. Subject co-ordinators will have an overview of progression of skills and what children have learnt in previous years and what they will learn.

The Headteacher advised governors that there was a new team leading EYFS and the school was looking to introduce International Early Years Curriculum, details had been circulated to governors ahead of the meeting. Governors heard that members of staff were excited by the opportunities the scheme would bring, the Headteacher had spoken to a teacher using the scheme in another school and they reported that it had significantly improved the early year's outcomes at their school.

The International Early Years Curriculum would cost around £3,000 and the school would have access to online resources, 18 units in total.

Governor's thoughts about the school purchasing International Early Years Curriculum were welcomed and the Headteacher requested that governors send all feedback to her

by Friday.

ACTION

Governors were referred to the staffing update which was circulated ahead of the meeting.

The Headteacher reported that approximately 43 children would be joining in September, and added that the year 4 group would be split into 2 small classes as there was 45 children in total.

Governors heard that the number of children joining the school nursery next year was low, with only 24 children in total. 8 children had requested full time places and the rest would be part time mornings or afternoons. The Headteacher explained that the school would be opening the nursery for mornings only and any children staying in the afternoon would move to the reception class with the Teaching Assistant going with them.

The school had advertised internally for a Family Support Worker, the Headteacher explained the reasoning behind this decision and the how the role would support the school. The school would purchase a lower rate Behaviour Support Service from the Local Authority and this would bring some savings.

Q – How many hours will the Family Support Worker be contracted for? It is a full time post.

Q – What would the starting salary be? Around £21,000.

The school had also advertised for two Teaching Assistant Scale 3 and interviews would be taking place next week.

Governor questions were invited.

Q – How have you found the virtual interviews? They are not the same as meeting candidates in person, however we have sent a number of different activities for them to complete so we can get an understanding of how they work.

Budget Update

The School Business Manager reported that an indicative budget has been set for next year, however this will depend on the final figure when the 2019.20 budget closes. The carry forward figure was currently predicted to be around £100,000.

Finally, the Chairperson shared a slide show on screen of pictures taken showing the provision around school. The Chair commended members of staff for their continued hard work.

Q – A second letter was sent to parents to remind them not to enter the playground during drop off and pick up, was this due to a particular problem? It was to remind parents as members of staff were welcoming families at the school gates.

9. Executive Headteacher Update

➤ Budget Update

Mr Whitehead explained that monthly budget monitoring had taken place, at the end of May the school budget predicted a £116,000 carry forward. Mr Whitehead

explained the savings which had been made in the school budget due to reduced pupil numbers and also some additional expenditure.

Mr Whitehead referred to the Headteacher report and the list of potential expenditure next year.

➤ Lord Agnew's letter 12.02.20

Governors confirmed that they had received the letter ahead of the meeting and had noted the contents.

➤ Summer holiday provision – initial thoughts

Mr Whitehead shared his initial thoughts that the summer holidays would be the first official holiday for members of staff since February, as the closure during the Whitsun holidays was to allow a deep clean to be carried out and wider risk assessment preparations ahead of the schools wider opening.

Mr Whitehead discussed the potential concerns which would be raised by teachers unions, regarding the safety of members of staff and contractual conditions being broken over the summer term. Members of staff have been under a considerable amount of stress and they have carried out remarkable work adapting to the changing situation.

Governors heard that there is little information known about the government's initiative to offer lessons during the summer holidays, however the preferred option would be for local authorities to receiving funding to provide local initiatives for children.

A governor commented that it would be hard to get the best out of teachers during the holidays if they are tired and lacking enthusiasm. They added that teaching unions will work to ensure that teachers do not work during the summer holidays.

The Headteacher agreed with the comments made and added that the autumn term is long and it is essential that members of staff have a break before the term commences.

Mr Whitehead commented on the increasing number of risk assessments which school leaders will be required to complete during the summer holidays to prepare for the autumn term.

Governors noted that some members of staff may also have holidays booked and they would be financially impacted if they were expected to work.

Q – What provisions are there locally for families to access in the school holidays such as clubs? The school is able to signpost families to activities and there are some play schemes and recreational activities. It will be a difficult time for families.

Mr Whitehead added that there are currently no clear plans for holiday club providers to open in the summer holidays, he added that the majority are booked in advance.

The Headteacher stated that the government announcements have been made without the school having prior notice of the changes that will be made and this has been challenging.

10. Approval Trust actions regarding the appointment of a Chief Finance Officer to the

Trust and the appointment of a school business manager

Mr Whitehead advised that the Approval of the school business manager was not relevant for St Elisabeth's.

Governors APPROVED the appointment of a Chief Finance Officer

11. Terms of Office of Governors

Governors were advised that the following governors term of office would end on 6th December 2020:

Mrs K Dean, Foundation Governor

Governors noted that Mrs K Dean would be eligible for re-appointment.

Rev A Stanton agreed to discuss the re-appointment of Mrs K Dean with the PCC.

ACTION

The Headteacher highlighted that the governing board needs to appoint link governor roles for SEND and EYFS. It was agreed that an Inclusion Governor be considered.

ACTION

Mr Gallagher commented that governing boards are being encouraged to consider the diversity of their boards.

12. Date & Time of future Meetings:

- LGB meeting: Monday 20th July 2020, 4pm

The Headteacher asked governors to consider if they would like her to present any data at the next meeting.

Mr Whitehead explained that data and targets would be discussed next year, as the data the school has is from march and therefore it is no longer accurate as children will have moved on. He added that as children are no longer accessing the same education the school will need to assess them again when they return.

Governors heard that teachers unions are requesting that there be no visits from Ofsted next year to allow schools to focus on the wellbeing of the children. It is hoped that the catch up fund promised by the government can be used for wellbeing activities and not purely academic.

The clerk was asked to ensure that Transition was added to the next meeting agenda.

ACTION

Mr Whitehead advised that at the next meeting they will hopefully be able to discuss the schools plans for September as the government has agreed to share more details of their expectations.

13. Closing Prayer

Governors said Grace at the close of the meeting.

Signed..... Date.....

Mr L Jamieson (Chair)

Meeting closed at 6:10pm

Summary of actions

- ACTION: Governor's thoughts about the school purchasing International Early Years Curriculum were welcomed and the Headteacher requested that governors send all feedback to her by Friday.
- ACTION: Rev A Stanton agreed to discuss the re-appointment of Mrs K Dean with the PCC.
- ACTION: The Headteacher highlighted that the governing board needs to appoint link governor roles for SEND and EYFS. It was agreed that an Inclusion Governor be considered.
- ACTION: The clerk was asked to ensure that Transition was added to the next meeting agenda.