

MENDIP EDGE FEDERATION

MINUTES OF GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Held on Tuesday 23 June 2020 at 6pm, Via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:

Mike Brownbill, Will Ewens, Kate Golding, Tim Hawkings, Richard Holmes, Sarah Lorimer, Stefan McHale, Diane Sleeman, Adrian Warman, Maggie Wookey, John Virgin

APOLOGIES RECEIVED: Lucy Frampton

IN ATTENDANCE: Debbie Andrews (Clerk)

The Chair thanked governors again for participating online via Microsoft Teams which was necessary due to prevailing government and public health advice not to meet in person to prevent spread of the Covid-19 virus.

The Chair asked each attendee to introduce themselves to the meeting and checked everyone could hear and be heard. He also asked if there were any concerns which they would like addressed in this meeting. A governor mentioned the welcome return of pupils in Year 6 and another governor mentioned that media headlines were influencing expectations around the current crisis which did not always reflect what was possible to deliver in practice.

MEGB19/20:42 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

MEGB19/20:43 AGREEMENT OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 5 MAY

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 May were agreed and will be signed when possible after the Covid-19 lockdown is eased.

MEGB19/20:44 MATTERS ARISING

RIDDOR – Mrs Andrews has sought clarification from the Trust. They have confirmed that RIDDOR applies to an employee who has tested positive with Covid-19. The school would report to HSE through EEC.

Audit – Mr Ewens has re-visited his audit and amended the section.

DSL – Mrs Andrews has sought clarification from the Trust and there is currently not a job description for a DSL. Mrs Wookey has acquired a copy from Jayne Wetherill and she will share with Mrs Sleeman and the other headteachers.

MW

Standards – the meeting will be re-scheduled due to the fast changing situation in the schools with the current crisis.

DA

MEGB19/20:45 HEADTEACHER REPORTS

Mr McHale, Mrs Wookey and Mr Ewens provided governors with verbal reports as follows:

Draycott & Rodney Stroke and Shipham First Schools

Reception and Year 1 pupils have been in school and the pre schools are open from 9 am until 12 noon. There are staggered starts and finishes. The Year 4's are now in – 20 at Draycott and Rodney Stoke and 16 at Shipham doing two weeks each. The children are delighted. There are no plans to bring the other years back. Two Year 4's have not returned due to parental choice. One in Shipham – vulnerable family – social worker supporting family at home and work being posted. Ongoing concern for September. The other one is in Draycott and is not attending due to shielding.

Staff have been amazing and parents supportive.

Home schooling effectiveness is an ongoing challenge. It is getting harder to motivate the children.

If the situation is longer term, may be look at other options for learning that are more interactive.

Most of the SEND and vulnerable pupils are now back in school. Two vulnerable children are still at home in Shipham – social workers are involved.

Signed Dated

Pupil premium children have been in from the start.
Teachers are on the phone regularly and do Zoom calls with children to keep them engaged.
Staff morale is good. Advice is being sought from the Trust regarding the way forward for staff shielding.
Staff are getting used to working in bubbles and motivation is good.
Working with Fairlands with the transition for the Year 4's.
Mr Ewens has spoken to the parents and has reassured them that the schools will do their best for the children when they return. Looking to support pupils with gaps in their learning and with their mental health and emotional needs.

Cheddar – Reception and Year 1 pupils have returned and there are two Reception bubbles and three Year 1 bubbles. Four days for reception and three days for Year 1. 72% of Year 1 have returned and 57% of Reception due to parental choice and shielding. There may be a few more Reception children after 30 June which will make a third bubble. There are two key worker bubbles which have been growing – 26 split between two most days. Also there is a preschool key worker bubble and two other bubbles. Year 4 – 65 will return. Two not coming back. Two sessions to be held next week 9 am -1pm and the other half the same time the following week. On Mon Tues and Wed of the last week all Year 4's will be in.
All staff are utilised. The most difficult area to manage is the toilets because of their centralised nature and lunchtimes are taking a long time. The children are happy to be back and the staff are enjoying working in smaller groups. The children in school are working well. There is a risk assessment for vulnerable staff to see what they can currently do in school.
Children and parents are tiring of home learning. Most vulnerable families have chosen not to come in. An email is sent to SEND children weekly or a phone call made. Pupil premium children are phoned. The ELSA has been involved in this.
Children on EHCPs are coming in for some sessions each week.
Generally staff morale is good. Some are incredibly anxious. Trying to persuade them that it is safe and the challenge will be how to get some of these people back to a normal working pattern.
Year 4 transition – SEND pupils making visits to Fairlands working with Mr Passingham and Mr McHale.
Increasingly concerned about Years 2 and 3 who will not be returning until September. Looking for a transition project for them.
Generally positive. Nobody has said they are not sending their child back in September.

Fairlands – higher number of key workers and vulnerable pupils from 1 June. The plan to have all the year groups back before the summer holidays was vetoed and then it was back to the drawing board.
From 15 June, Year 6 was invited back mornings only with 8/9 pupils in a bubble. 60% uptake. Each bubble is staffed by two members of staff.
Running at approximately 110/115 pupils including the key worker and vulnerable pupils which are around 55/60 pupils.
Year Heads are carefully managing the key worker requests to not go higher than 120, which is approximately the 25% capacity allowed.
To date, Year 6's have been looking at online safety and mental health and now will be having maths, English, science and humanities lessons in school, leaving them to do creative activities at home in the afternoon.
Parents are happy; some have waited to see how things go. One parent has been anxious regarding the group for her child and solutions have been discussed although they may not be agreeable to the parent.

Signed Dated

With the updated guidance, it has been possible to invite Year 8's to return to school for one afternoon per week in the remaining three weeks for transition and to say goodbye. The Year 6's leave late morning and the Year 8's will arrive at 1.30 pm. The Year 8's will leave at 3 pm and the key worker/vulnerable pupils leave at 3.35 pm. Staff will only work in one bubble.

There is no capacity to take Years 5 and 7 until September.

No visitors are allowed on site and there is care with any contractors needing to be on site. The temperatures of the children are taken when they arrive each day.

Home schooling is becoming less effective. Some pupils are not engaging so teachers are looking at enhancing lessons with more PowerPoints, videos etc. Each tutor will hold a Teams meeting with their tutor group. Parents are being encouraged to do practical lessons with their children by engaging them in activities around the home. There is ongoing contact with SEND and pupil premium children, details of which are saved in a spreadsheet.

Tutors also have been checking on their tutees and updating the information on a spreadsheet. From these conversations, tutors can see if a child may be considered increasingly vulnerable during lockdown and needs to come into school.

Staff morale – holding up pretty well. Low in some members of staff.

Teachers pleased to get back to doing teaching.

Four teachers and five non-teaching staff continuing to shield. Looking to see how they can return safely in September.

Transition is happening with Year 4. There is an area on the website to enable parents to access a suite of useful information. Each Year 4 child will receive a pack including details of their tutor, tutor group and a buddy letter. There is also a virtual tour and feedback regarding this has been good. A video message has been filmed to be shared with the children and Teams meetings will be held by Mr Passingham and Mr McHale. The children will also be asked to undertake a task with the title of 'what makes me special' which they can then share in their new tutor groups.

From next week Year 8's will have their work set by the Kings of Wessex Academy to support their transition and have also been given login credentials for FireFly, the online portal used by Kings.

Planning for September has seen a plethora of plans which may be a combination of rotas, home learning and staggered hours.

The children will have Microsoft Office accounts in September to give them greater access to MS Teams and other tools for home learning and collaboration.

Want to get the current Years 5 and 7 (September Years 6 and 8) in school in September as soon as possible. May have to look initially at a primary model for the new Year 5's with pupils based in one classroom rather than moving around the school.

Conscious we need to prepare in case there is a second wave in September.

Mr McHale is very grateful to Mrs O'Neill who has worked since school closed in the canteen. Governors noted their thanks to all the teaching and support staff, including the Fairlands kitchen.

Mr Virgin shared that he is teaching 9/10 Year 6 children in school and really relishing being in front of a class again teaching and helping children. He felt that staff morale was good.

The headteachers are concerned about government suggestions that staff may be asked to work in the summer holidays as they need the time to clear their headspace.

Free school meal vouchers will be issued over the summer period. It is better for the vouchers to be issued every two weeks rather than at the start

Signed Dated

for six weeks, as it was felt some families may not be able to effectively manage the vouchers over any longer period and could run out of food. It was recognised that this would require greater management resource from the schools.

Mr Warman thanked the headteachers for their risk assessments that have been shared with governors. Mr Perry at the Trust has reviewed them and asked questions. Mr McHale commented that they are reviewed weekly and sometimes daily due to the changing situation.

A governor commented that it is good for the schools to have plans in place should there be a second spike and there is a further lockdown.

A governor asked if there was an opportunity for schools to collaborate with the on line learning. Mr McHale commented that the teachers are fully utilised with teaching in school, setting online work and making safeguarding and tutor calls with parents.

Mrs Wookey mentioned that the Trust are looking into a common platform for home learning.

There is a concern that once the children have returned to school there will be more safeguarding concerns.

A governor commented that the foodbank was operating for families that needed it.

Mr Warman thanked the headteachers for their in depth reports and thanked them for all their hardwork at this difficult time. He also asked the headteachers to pass on to the staff that the governors recognise their efforts and hardwork.

Hds

MEGB19/20:46 WESSEX LEARNING TRUST

In line with WLT procedures we have been asked to request nominations for Chair/Vice Chair to share with the trustees. Mr Warman agreed to stand as Chair and Mrs Sleeman/Mr Holmes agreed to be Vice Chairs. There were no other nominations.. Mrs Andrews will advise Mr Perry at the Trust.

DA

Mr Warman mentioned to governors that a letter had been received from Julian Wooster regarding disbanding the Somerset district councils and having a single unitary council.

MEGB19/20:47 REPORTS

Finance Committee – as per the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June. Budgets – thanks to the Finance Officers for producing their budgets. All have balanced but are tight. The Trust now have the budgets for approval. Cheddar – Mrs Wookey has raised with the Trust the pre school carry forward which the pre school had anticipated retaining.

Mr McHale mentioned that there is one billion catch up money being released for schools which has made headlines. However, schools will lose Year 7 catch up money and sports premium which means a loss in the region of £30,000 p.a. for Fairlands.

Mrs Wookey asked if there was any money left in the conversion grant and Mr Warman will request an update from the Trust.

AW

Mr Ewens is concerned at his low predicted number of 51 pupils for September 2021 at Draycott & Rodney Stoke. He has held meetings with Mr Perry and there will be a large amount of marketing. Mr Ewens may need to look at his staffing for next year. Mr McHale offered his support to Mr Ewens.

Signed Dated

Foundation Committee – Rev Hawkings gave a verbal report following the committee meeting held on 18 June. Minutes to be emailed to governors. The meeting looked at the two church schools’ responses to their respective SIAMS inspections. Looking at global issues and setting up global links including via a connection in South Africa. The school councils will also be encouraged to look at global issues.

The SIAMS reports suggested that the full governing body (rather than just Foundation governors) are encouraged to take a more active interest in the Christian ethos of the schools. It was suggested that a presentation could be given at the beginning of one of the governors meetings.

A governor mentioned that Thea Oliver is a new curate in Cheddar Benefice and could add support for Draycott and Rodney Stoke and Cheddar First Schools.

Mr Warman will undertake a local recruitment drive for more governors in the months ahead.

AW

Governor Support – there is a lot of information being sent out by Somerset County Council which is shared with governors as necessary by Mrs Andrews

Safeguarding – Mrs Sleeman confirmed that she had not been able to attend the online safeguarding webinar due to technical difficulties.

DS

Mrs Sleeman would like to contact the DSLs before the end of term.

The headteachers commented that there has been a lack of safeguarding feedback from Somerset Safeguarding since the start of the lockdown.

MEGB19/20:48 ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/2021

Committees – governors were asked to consider whether they wished to remain on the same committees in 2020/2021. Governors were happy to continue and the Chairs will be elected at the first committee meetings.

Meeting dates – Mrs Andrews will share the governing body meeting dates once the Trust meeting date calendar has been agreed and shared.

DA

Governor Appointments –Mrs Golding and Mr Holmes are coming to the end of their terms. Both Mrs Golding and Mr Holmes wished to stand again and governors agreed their appointments. Mrs Andrews will advise SSE Governance.

DA

Mr Warman thanked Mrs Wookey for all her hardwork as headteacher of Cheddar First School for 17 years. Governors gave a round of applause.

Mrs Smith will be acting headteacher from September until December. Her current Deputy Head and SENDCo roles will be separated to backfill during this interim period and an internal advert is being drafted. Mr Warman will liaise with Mr Perry and Mr Ball regarding this. Mrs Smith’s teaching commitment will also be backfilled.

The application pack for the head teacher vacancy will be ready within the next couple of weeks and advertised before the summer. It is intended that the interviews will take place in September to make an appointment to begin in January.

Mrs Wookey and the staff governors left the meeting.

MEGB19/20:49 HEADTEACHER RECRUITMENT

Please see separate confidential minute.

Signed Dated