



Directors' Note for Portfolio Groups

Portfolio title: Pilton Bluecoat Ethos Group and Local Governing Body

Date of meeting: 17th March 2021, 7.30pm, Held Virtually

Attended by: Caroline Tucker, Marion Sanders, Caroline Preston, Dan Polak, Verity Goss (clerk).

Brief overview of discussion

Welcome and apologies

Apologies received and accepted from Louisa Burbidge.

ETHOS

Community Based work update

DP reported that the school was in contact with the rotary club, and it had been suggested that members come in to school and read with the children. This was not possible under current restrictions, but it was felt it would be beneficial when guidance allowed.

An opportunity had arisen for the school to work with the allotments – DP stated this might be as part of the learning champions work. Again, this would have to wait until guidance allowed, and the volunteer adults felt ready to do so.

MS reported that it had not been possible to create a trail around the whole churchyard due to the restrictions and layout of the churchyard. They were looking at a 'walk through church' possibility. MS stated that the church had been advised to wait until the 'rule of six' guidance was in place – looking at May.

Collective Worship update

DP reminded local governors that mixed collective worship in school was still not possible, but that class based worship continued. MS continued to film a collective worship each week, and DP also led a collective worship each week.

MAIN BUSINESS MEETING

VG confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

Register of Business Interests

None declared.

Minutes of previous meeting

Agreed as accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising from the minutes

Attendance – DP stated that the child who had not returned to school had now returned, with external agency support. What was being done to support this child? DP explained the pastoral support that the child accessed in school. They were also visited in school and observed by an external agency. The child was happy and thriving in school.

Whole group training – DP stated that Ian Thomas was arranging this.

Correspondence

None received.

Reports

Head of School report update after lockdown

All had received the report and had been invited to e-mail questions in advance. DP thanked local governors for sending these questions, as it was important to challenge leadership.

How have you monitored access to home learning 'attendances/turning in of work' v non-attendance across the school in terms of all children accessing your curriculum teaching and learning offer online/in school? – Previously you stated there wasn't a requirement to monitor attendance online as such; therefore, how do you feel progress and provision in these difficult circumstances for every child went in terms of the SDP aims/OFSTED stated online offer and whether gaps matter in terms of schooling accountability? (Could anything be called into question in the future against Article 28 (e) United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child [... to an education] – UNCRC - [Convention on the Rights of the Child \(unhcr.org\)](https://www.unhcr.org/).)*

DP felt that if the school was inspected, there would be questions about attendance during virtual learning, even though there was not a requirement to formally monitor online attendance. DP explained that there were no sanctions a school could take if a child or parents was not engaging at home. Staff had monitored children's engagement weekly on a Red-Amber-Green rating. DP explained the calls made home if there were concerns about a child's engagement, which were supportive in nature. A 'script' for opening the conversation had been written so that staff were consistent when calling. Normally engagement had increased after these calls. On the whole families had engaged well, although this varied week to week. Staff had noticed a significant decline following the announcement that schools would be reopening. DP explained the criteria for a child to be classed as vulnerable through lack of engagement. There had been an increase of children classed as vulnerable attending school through lockdown – 17% in first week, 26% in the last week, which was due to meeting the needs of vulnerable families.

DP stated that the rights of the child were the access to the education, which was provided, but families had to take up the offer. No sanctions were available if parents were not engaging.

Was the engagement recorded in case it was needed later? DP explained that all interactions and calls were logged. A local governor queried if parents might not answer the phone as the school's number showed as withheld – DP stated that if a parent did not answer an answerphone message was left asking the parent to call back. DP stated that some staff were making the calls while working from home, so would have withheld numbers for that.

In the termly classroom tests did you see an impact of lockdown 1 on learning in terms of where on average children would normally be in the autumn term, both in general and in particular of disadvantaged/low attainment pupils? Consequently when might you be testing after lockdown 3 to establish levels of recovery provision in terms of NC/age related progress and attainment to make a more in-depth judgement of recovery needs for PBA?

DP stated that it was known that after a period of time immediate recall did decrease – there was always a fallback when children returned after summer. Children had been assessed a little later in the term to account for the time of. The first assessment had been broadly in line with the previous cohort – it was not considered a significant difference. December assessments were in line with previous cohorts. Children would not be assessed immediately now they had returned, although it was important to know where the gaps were, it was important for children to feel part of school again first. Instead of formal assessments, staff had been reflecting on what they had taught online and how well it had been engaged with to consider what was needed to be taught again.

Staff were aware that lockdown could have a negative impact on children's wellbeing. There had been more cases of domestic violence, families struggling and children self reporting negatively. Going forwards staff were expecting that some children would be affected negatively, but were not assuming all children were. Pastoral support remained important.

How are disadvantaged pupils achieving in relation to all pupils in the school, and in relation to pupils nationally?

DP stated that this was not yet known, but would be looked at when assessments were completed. It was expected that the bell curve of attainment would have flattened – some children had been well engaged and had parents able to support them full time, while some had not. It was expected that disadvantaged children would have been affected more. DP explained what was done to target PP children.

You note in area 2 that funding won't be spent on staffing 'so that arrangements don't become imprecise.' Based on the EEF guide and related Q-card it seems that additional tutors could be part of their suggested strategy. Can you tell us more about PBA's thinking/planning/spending decisions with the recovery approach?

DP stated that it was felt to be more beneficial to use the funding on staff who already knew the children, rather than external tutors – for example, HLTAs and part time staff who were willing to do additional hours. Tutoring was considered, but would need to be handled sensitively to avoid demotivating children – using current staff would help with this.

How are we reminding parents on how to take practical steps to set safety parameters for the internet?

DP explained that the school's influence was limited, but they can always give guidance to parents. DP stated that they would always encourage parents to understand that some websites/social media/games had age limits for a reason. Education on this was important. DP wanted to arrange an online safety evening for parents – some parents did not understand how high the dangers could be. CT stated that the school had previously held an event where parents could bring in their devices to get help with the settings. Agreed it would be useful to do this again once restrictions allowed.

You mention Optimising teacher talk – what does this mean in practice?

DP explained that this was looking at how to explain things as succinctly as possible to stay on point.

One staff member continuing to work from home – what are their specific duties?

DP explained the pastoral support role while working from home. The staff member was due to return to school in a few weeks.

Pedagogic development – There was an element of joint planning across TEAM – is this not going to continue post-covid?

DP confirmed that joint planning was continuing, and was very beneficial to staff.

Recovery funding – are teachers and educational support staff welcome to suggest ways to spend the funding so they feel invested in school improvement?

DP stated that this was the case – at the beginning of a staff meeting DP had shared what the funding had been used for, and asked for staff input on other beneficial uses.

RSE – how many parents are likely to withdraw their child and what support can be given to the parent to ensure that the child is not missing a vital element of education?

DP stated that parents could withdraw their children from RSE that did not form part of the national curriculum. Staff were not aware of who may withdraw their child – there had been two withdrawn last year. Generally parents were happy for the school to take on the responsibility for having these conversations. DP stated it was important to engage with parents had concerns, and the school were happy to share the content used with parents.

Result of Parent consultation

Parent consultations were taking place online – it was hoped that the last one of the year would be on site again. Some technical issues had been reported when two parents were trying to join from different places – DP stated this would be looked into. Local governor asked if there was a possibility to have a

blended approach in future, as more parents may be able to attend the meetings if they were held online. DP confirmed that he would like to offer this in future, as it gave more opportunities to connect with parents that worked away or did not have available childcare.

Recovery fund strategy

DP stated that this was being worked through with staff – it was not being assumed that schools would continue to receive this. DP explained why the fund was partly being used for legacy items, as there would be children joining the school missing a large part of their KS1 education, who would continue to need support.

Attendance

Attendance since lockdown 99%. Children were happy to be back in school.

Monitoring and Accountability

School Development Plan – measuring outcomes for pupils

DP stated that the SDP was being loaded on BlueSky to be easily accessible. It was hoped that when meetings were in person it would be easier to do an overview on the use of BlueSky. CT encouraged governors to look at the resources section, which included some useful documents on governance. Local governors were encouraged to make use of the training opportunities offered.

Safeguarding

Largely covered in HT report. DP stated that there were a few more cases of social work involvement in school, which directly correlated with the lockdown. Once agencies were involved the support was beneficial – ‘early help’ stage could be difficult.

Cycle of Policy reviews

- RSE/PHSE
- Assessment and Feedback

All had received the policies. Agreed.

VG explained the policy cycle. CT suggested that this be placed on BlueSky so local governors were aware of which policies they should be familiar with. Agreed it would be useful to have an explanation of acronyms available.

Governor Visits for summer term

DP explained that visitors were permitted, with distancing restrictions. DP appreciated that local governors may not yet be comfortable with visiting school again. Investigating assessment systems (including visualisers) discussed as a possible focus. DP to consider the best use of visits.

MS stated she felt that an ethos visit would be beneficial, as it was hard to express ethos currently.

DP to arrange dates, visits to be reported back to the LGB.

Strategic

Governor Training / Bluesky

BlueSky discussed earlier in the meeting. MS had attended the Diocese governance induction training.

Communication with school community

Discussion on the possibility of setting up an e-mail address for parents who wanted to contact the LGB. Agreed it would be a good idea to have an item in the newsletter explained the role of the LGB in comparison to trustees. CT to draft item and distribute to LGB members for comment.

Next meeting to have a reminder of the complaints procedure so LGB members were aware of it in case a parent approached them directly.

Matters brought forward by the Chair

No matters brought forward.

LB had sent a message to inform the meeting that the PTA was trying to organise an Easter Raffle.

Dates of next meetings: Friday 11th June, 1.30pm in school.