

Ashton Hayes Primary School Full Governing Body Meeting

Meeting of: Full Governors Part One – BY ZOOM	Term: Spring Term 2020
Place: Ashton Hayes Primary School	Date: Tuesday 19th May 2020 4.00-6.00pm
Present: Mr Matt Hover (Headteacher) Mrs Sharon Varey (Chair) Mrs Ann Lowry (Vice Chair) Mr David Wilson Mrs Tracy Snell Miss Beth Carter	Mrs Margaret Papworth Mrs Mary Jefferson Mrs Ruth Mason Mr James Lutton Mr Matt Denman Mr Jack Mellor
Apologies: None	In Attendance: Mr J. Gilbert Ms Vivien Couche (Clerk)

Item	Minute
1.0	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SV welcomed Governors to the meeting, noting this was Matt Denman’s first Governors meeting since being appointed Parent Governor.
2.0	Governor update/election of Jack Mellor (co-opted governor) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SV updated Governors on recent contact with Martin Willis who had expressed an interest in becoming part of the Governing Body. MW has a strategic role with an energy company and appears to be an ideal candidate for the Sub A Committee. He has completed the form to become an LA Governor and this application is now being processed by Nicky Bebbington (CWAC). SV also introduced Jack Mellor to the Governing Body, noting earlier conversations in February between him, MH and SV about taking on the role of Governor. JM teaches Maths at Upton High School and has recently moved to Ashton Hayes. Governors confirmed their readiness to elect JM and welcomed him to the Governing Body.
3.0	Operation of the Governing Body in the present situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SV updated Governors that in recent weeks since schools closed, she’s been in regular contact with MH regarding school governance. She reminded Governors that she’d emailed them guidance documents on priorities for school governance from the NGA and the School Bus. <i>SV asked Governors whether they were comfortable with current arrangements to continue i.e. for SV to act as the central contact and relay information to the Governing Body.</i> She confirmed that in the event of her becoming unwell or unavailable, she would delegate this role to AL. Governors confirmed their agreement to this arrangement continuing. SV noted she’d be meeting with MH regularly, expecting to do this again before the half term holiday and commenting that more regular Governor meetings would be necessary in light of the current situation. MH highlighted the need for another Governors meeting early next week, during the half term holiday. Governors agreed.

School update - Current situation and Potential re-opening - June 1st - current planning and guidance

- MH updated Governors on the current situation, noting that school has remained open to vulnerable and key workers children since closures were announced in March. He commented that numbers have remained fairly stable with around 9 children typically attending school. He noted that school will remain open during the upcoming half term for the same cohort, MH will be in school next week to lead this provision. He added that the rota system in place has worked very well and staff have been amazing.
- MH updated Governors that since the announcement was made about schools reopening on 1st June, information from government and DfE has been drip-fed. Schools are required to risk assess reopening in light of government guidance, in the context of their individual capacity. Groups of children must be no larger than 15, so for the Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 classes to return, plus the vulnerable/key worker children group, there would be a total of 7 groups needing to be accommodated. As Governors are aware, school does not have the physical space in terms of classrooms to accommodate these groups separately.
- MH confirmed that government guidance prioritises provision at school for the vulnerable/key worker children, then Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children. A detailed risk assessment is required for planning the potential to reopen school, which MH has been discussing with the EIP schools. The risk assessment he's prepared indicates that:
 - School can continue to be open for vulnerable/key workers children
 - Reception children (25 in 2 groups)
 - Year 1 children (20 in 2 groups)
 - Maple Room will be a designated isolation room not a teaching space
- However, there is insufficient capacity for the Year 6 children to be accommodated, split into 2 groups (17 in total). MH has been advised by the Director of Education, David McNaught, that accommodating more than 15 children in a group does not comply with government guidance, so this is not permitted. MH has queried the possibility of Year 6 attending school on different days using a rota system.
- MH continued to set out the risk assessment, which covers hygiene, staggering the staffing rota and safe teaching cover for classes. He elaborated on the priority of hygiene measures, noting large quantities of hand sanitiser ordered. **TS queried whether school has sufficient manpower to handle all the extra cleaning required.** MH confirmed plans in place to make the necessary hygiene tasks feasible, including:
 - Reallocating MDAs to the task of cleaning, supporting Mrs Salt and Teachers
 - Hot water and detergent available in every classroom
 - Budget available for additional cleaning staff
- **AL queried whether it would be possible for school to refuse to reopen, given that the Northwest is currently one of the worst regions for infection rates?** MH responded that if school were unable to comply with guidance and therefore not going to reopen, CWAC would support this decision. He commented on the general frustration from schools at government failing to publish the science which underpinned the decision that it is safe for schools to reopen. One aspect of the data is believed to indicate that Reception age children are less likely to contract the virus. **AL queried the response of the EIP to the guidance** – MH commented that they are in regular discussion and querying alternative approaches to the guidance. **TS queried whether school knows why government is pushing this approach for younger years to return to school first?** MH commented that the reasoning is unclear, other than this age group's apparently lower susceptibility to infection.

4.0

- **BC commented that, safety discussions aside, her concern is for the mental health of the children returning, for whom school will appear so different.** She noted that children won't be able to work or play together, or be comforted if they are upset. BC showed Governors the appearance of her classroom, which has been stripped bare of items that could transfer the virus. Governors agreed it looked very different and MH noted he shared her view of the potential risk to their mental wellbeing. JG noted that, whenever school reopens, it will look very different to how it did before and the key question to consider is whether or not it is safe to do so. BC commented that as soon as breaks happen, children can't be distanced from each other. MH agreed on the inevitability of this as children are such social beings. He also noted the impact for staff, whose wellbeing is similarly affected.
- **TS queried what the view of staff is towards the prospect of reopening?** MH commented that it is mixed, some are keen to return, others are more concerned and share the views BC described. **AL questioned whether the risk of Kawasaki syndrome is a real one or whether its been sensationalised by the media?** MH commented that he didn't feel able to answer that question, however he was aware that French schools have seen an increase in the number of Coronavirus infections since reopening. He noted that UK schools are being compared with Denmark, which isn't a fair comparison as that country is better set up for a socially distanced return to school.
- **SV questioned Governors and MH on their view about reopening.** MH responded that he was unsure as to whether it is safe for school to reopen, noting that it is impossible to mitigate for every risk. He added that the plan to reopen does mitigate risks as far as possible, so it would be fair to say that reopening school is possible within the parameters given. JG added that if school trusts government guidance, then the plan to reopen meets government criteria. If the infection/R rate remains low, then the plan is robust.
- **MH commented that the landscape is constantly changing and in 1 or 2 weeks it could be different.** He noted that he has written a holding email for parents and wants to send them a letter regarding plans to reopen. MH has surveyed parents of the returning year groups and heard back from most of them. 6 of the Reception parents won't be sending their children back and they won't be fined for this. He noted that school has to plan for the maximum capacity of year groups whether or not they will return. **TS queried whether parents who don't send their children back will be set home learning?** MH advised that the guidance is not to set home learning for those children, however in reality there will be some work sent home. He added that there wouldn't be the potential to feedback on the children's work done at home.
- **SV asked Governors whether MH has the backing of the Governing Body to reopen for some year groups as set out above.**
 - **AL asked MH whether the key workers/vulnerable children would be kept separate, or if they were from Reception/Year 1 they would be reintegrated with their year group.** MH confirmed they would be reintegrated where possible.
 - **TS questioned the operational aspects of reopening e.g. the numbers in each room, how queuing parents would be handled, door handles cleaned etc.** MH described the 1-way system to be in place when children are dropped off and collected, with 2m gaps marked out. He described children being kept in 'bubbles' being met one at a time by a staff member from that bubble. Only 1 adult would be permitted to drop off their child and this process would be staggered within a 10-15 minute timeframe. **TS queried whether that timing was sufficiently spaced out, to enable 5 bubbles to be managed and avoid overlaps?** MH recognised potential issues with parking and noted the need for parents to comply with timings given. SV suggested that reopening be staggered so that in the first week only Reception children return, the next week also Year 1 children. She commented that it will be hard for families to become accustomed to new routines and a staggered start will mean it is easier to test out new routines/cleaning measures before increasing numbers.
 - **Governors discussed the difficulties around Reception being the first year group to return, noting the myriad issues around the soft play**

items needing to be removed, the lack of coherence to social distancing. RM commented that Year 6 would be much better able to cope with measures than the younger year groups. MH agreed with Governors comments but noted the need to demonstrate compliance

- ***AL queried whether school is accountable to CWAC or to government?*** MH advised that the local authority give a strong steer but school ultimately has to comply with the guidance. SV advised Governors that MH is required to notify CWAC by Thursday 21st May whether he can safely reopen school. To do this he needs the backing of Governors.
- ***AL questioned the views of Parent Governors and the Clerk (also a parent) about whether they would send their children back.***
 - o TS commented that she would not return her children.
 - o RM commented that it was clear that MH had done a lot of preparation and careful consideration. She questioned whether Year 6 could be added safely to the mix, which MH confirmed could not be achieved, unless done by rota or using the outside space.
 - o MD commented that as a Reception parent he wouldn't be returning his child to school, because until the older sibling was also able to return this would be too upsetting for his younger son.
 - o VC commented that she would return her son if he were in a relevant year group as she believes herself to have had and recovered from the virus. Other family members developed minor symptoms so she considers it a low risk for her child to return.
 - o MJ noted she had not yet reached a decision, her children want to return but she needs to consider family impacts from them doing so. ***MJ highlighted the need to be mindful of the privileged position of some but not all families, to be able to consider this decision and make a choice as to whether to return their children.*** She also noted that government guidance may change if only 50% of children return. This might lead to the decision for more year groups to be added to the mix. She highlighted the key to reopening being the capacity to balance safeguarding, cleaning and potential staff cover in the event of sickness absence. If one person contracts the virus, the whole year group would need to isolate for 7/14 days.
- ***SV invited views from other Governors.*** DW commented on the complexity of the situation but noted his trust in MH's leadership. JL commented that this was a general question about safety and whether the whole school can comply with guidance. He noted that as no fines will be issued, this enables parents to make a choice about the situation for their own family. MP commented that this is a question being considered across the country and schools need to reopen at some point. She added that the longer children are off, the harder it will be for them to come back. She commented that it's helpful that the EIP schools are working together to help determine the best approach. MP added that she understands BC's concerns about the changed classroom look and feel for children, however she knows that the staff will do all they can to reassure children and help them understand it's a necessary step to keeping safe. MH added that he is planning a short video for children to communicate how they will be returning to school and what will be different. MP highlighted the Community Shop's volunteer system to manage the queue outside the shop, which works very well. She expressed her willingness to volunteer as a Governor to help with managing children arriving and leaving school. ***MP queried whether any of the children due to return would be shielding due to health issues?*** MH confirmed that some children in Year 1 are shielding but not in Year 6. MP summarised that she has 100% confidence in MH's decision.
- ***JM added that Years 8 and 10 are due to return on 8th June.*** He appreciated MH's clarification of information for Governors and commented that he expects parents to vote with their feet. He also hoped that science would confirm the validity of this approach in due course.
- ***BC queried how many parents have said they will send their children back.*** MH advised that 5 Reception children, 8 Year 1 children and 10

	<p>Year 6 children are definites, while the majority are undecided and many want more information. 23 of 60 possible children equates to <50%.</p> <p>– SV summarised that Governors had discussed the situation in detail and that meetings will continue to take place regularly in the coming days and weeks. A further full Governors meeting will take place early next week to review the situation.</p>																														
5.0	<p>Budget update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DW updated Governors that the budget position has changed since last year and now projects a surplus going forward. At a meeting earlier this week with Jo Morris, the budget position looks improved as a result of the prospective change of Head from MH to JG in an acting capacity. The budget can cover the cost of additional cleaning or staffing needs to address the current situation. JG noted that the position could be different again from January subject to a further change of leadership. Governors noted that small changes can have a large impact on the budget e.g. £7k for a Cleaner. MH noted he's built in contingencies e.g. to increase part time staff hours and employ a cleaner. Even in 3 years, the budget still projects a carry forward with these measures. MJ queried whether any funding is available to help with these measures, which MH advised is not yet the case. 																														
6.0	<p>Class structure/Staffing for September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MH flagged the email he'd previously sent to Governors on this topic with a proposed structure from September. He noted the focus on keeping things as familiar as possible for children, given all the other uncertainties to be addressed. Cohorts would stay together, teachers would change. PPA will be covered through Forest School. Governors agreed on the benefits of this approach for children's wellbeing and consistency, but recognise this may still be subject to change. JG noted that TA allocations are not yet finalised but if possible they'll keep working with children they currently support. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Class</th> <th>current year group (2019-2020)</th> <th>new year group (2020-2021)</th> <th>Teacher</th> <th>class size (approx.)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Kestrel</td> <td></td> <td>Reception</td> <td>Mrs Cuthbert</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sparrowhawk</td> <td>Reception</td> <td>Year 1</td> <td>Miss Carter</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Owl</td> <td>Year 1/2</td> <td>Year 2/3</td> <td>Miss Fray/Mrs Howe</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Peregrine</td> <td>Year 2/3</td> <td>Year 3/4</td> <td>Miss Davison</td> <td>33</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Buzzard</td> <td>Year 4/5</td> <td>Year 5/6</td> <td>Mr Morris</td> <td>33</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MJ queried the Buzzard class size of 33, which seems large and may have an impact on the children who've missed a large chunk of school this year in their preparation for SATs. MH agreed this needs to be considered but 33 is not an abnormal size and he has every faith in Mr Morris. JG added that TAs will be weighted towards supporting children in Buzzard class. 	Class	current year group (2019-2020)	new year group (2020-2021)	Teacher	class size (approx.)	Kestrel		Reception	Mrs Cuthbert	17	Sparrowhawk	Reception	Year 1	Miss Carter	25	Owl	Year 1/2	Year 2/3	Miss Fray/Mrs Howe	27	Peregrine	Year 2/3	Year 3/4	Miss Davison	33	Buzzard	Year 4/5	Year 5/6	Mr Morris	33
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7.0	<p>AOB</p> <p>Date and time for next meeting Monday 25th May 4pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MH queried whether Governors are happy with the contents of the proposed letter, which Governors confirmed they are. BC thanked MH for all his effort and research to support the planning and risk assessments to enable school to reopen. MH concluded that this is very much a collective effort and everyone is focused on doing their best for the children. SV asked MH to thank all staff on behalf of the Governors for all that they're doing. 																														