

NEWICK C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Governing Board held on Tuesday 23rd June 2020 from 8.30am to 9.45am

Present:

Mandy Watson (MW) (Chair), Natalie Alty (NA) (Headteacher), Mary Molloy (MM), Kalpna Robertson (KR), Caroline Smith (CS), Amy Clarke (AC), Sue Berry (SB), Rev. Paul Mundy (PM), Rob Boswell (RB), Chris Barnes (CB), Ian Bellis (IB), Jane Johnson (JJ) and Jo Lacey (JL)

John Philpott was the Clerk. The meeting was quorate (6) and took place remotely on the Microsoft Teams Conference Platform

1. Prayer

1.1 PM opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Apologies for absence

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Diane Reeds (DR) and Jon Tivey (JT). These were accepted.

3. Declaration of Interests

3.1 None declared. Written declarations were to be completed in the next term.

4. Minutes of the last Meeting on 5th May

4.1 The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting and as it was being held remotely, they were not signed.

4.2 Actions from the meeting were reported on as follows:

Point 10.1 SCR checked as part of the Health and Safety visit reported on at item 6.11 below.

Point 11.1 Review of policies reported on at Item 6.2 below

5. Report back from Resources Committee (Agenda Item 4)

5.1 RB said that the LA had twice reviewed the budget approved at the last FGB meeting. The LA spreadsheet capped the level of salary increase at 50% of what it could be and EW had advised the LA of this. The surplus decreased from the 5.14%, predicted in the budget agreed by Governors, to 1.70% and this was mainly due attributable to an error picked up in the budget planner spreadsheet and related to salaries. This year's budget would not be effected but a deficit of £30,000 was now projected in year 2.

5.2 There were other schools in the County who found themselves in a similar position. EW and NA were looking to see where changes and savings could be made to submit a revised and balanced budget. NA said that big increases in staffing costs made up such a high proportion of the budgets of smaller schools like Newick,

that increases were able to put the finances into imbalance. The LA had not yet advised the level of the grant towards those costs that Government would provide.

5.3 JJ said that she had written to the LA and received a reply. NA said that mistakes had been made because the questions asked were not clear enough and as a result the spread sheet did not work properly. Additionally, the usual drop in session to advise assist for School Business Managers with the process had not been held this year because of Covid-19. The budget had previously been prepared on a worst case scenario with the second year kept in balance. It was decided that RB and JJ should meet to discuss the issue before arranging a meeting with NA.

5.4 MW said that there was good news in relation to the Solar Panels project. NA said that Emily Winslade (EW), the School Business Manager, had obtained a firm proposal for free installation of solar panels on the roof of the school, which would leave a large sum in the Capital Fund and some of this could be used improve the inadequate Wi-Fi system. A grant had been applied for to improve IT facilities in relation to remote learning.

6. Headteacher's Report (Agenda Item 5)

6.1 NA had circulated reports before the meeting. One recorded the schools position during lockdown, included the numbers of children attending school. She said that these continued to increase so that classes were likely to be really full the following week. She was working on the transition process for children at all levels in readiness for a general return in September days. To achieve this the school would close on a number of days to all except those at risk.

6.2 The Early Year Policy had now been completed as had the Sex Education and Relationships Policy. The Discipline Policy and Procedures of the LA had been adopted for the school. NA updated the meeting on the revision of other policies. She said that she would take over responsibility for monitoring the review of policies.

6.3 The Safeguarding report was discussed by NA. She said that systems would be in place to see which children had not taken up the on-line learning and all children would be assessed when they returned to the school so that gaps in learning could be identified and addressed. Attainment for all would be a major prompt for this and this included allowing children at the top end of attainment to proceed at pace with their learning.

6.4 The school would continue to improve outdoor play facilities and train up play leaders.

6.5 NA said that mental health and wellbeing would be very important next year. AC said that diversity would be a good starting point in September and having two members of staff in each class would help staff wellbeing. NA said that three year groups had returned to school and it was evident that they had relaxed into the changed situation and enjoying time with friends within their bubbles and appreciated the social interaction.

6.6 MW said that NA's report to Governors should also be sent to parents, annotated to show the Governors support for the way in which the school was running. There

was discussion about the detail of this and it was decided that JL should add a few sentences from Governors at the beginning of the letter and liaise with NA for the letter to be sent home to parents the following day. After further discussion it was felt that NA should draft a new letter to parents with supporting comment from JL on behalf of Governors, forming part of it.

ACTION: NA and JL

NA write to parents on how the school was operating in lockdown, including a brief supporting statement from Governors, written by JL. The letter to be sent out on the following day.

6.7 NA was challenged about how those Year 6 children who were not coming into school were being supported over their transition to secondary school. She said that the school was managing two bubbles of Year 6 pupils and sharing information with those staying at home. Secondary schools were also dealing direct with those children. There were not many pupils in this category and most often it was because of vulnerable people in their home.

6.8 Chailey Secondary School intended to have face to face transition time for the pupils joining them. SB said that the documents produced by NA and the transition processes were really strong and thanked all the staff at Newick School for their work.

6.9 Certain groups of children across the school needed more help and teacher visits. Often this was because the parents were having difficulty home schooling and needed support for that.

6.10 NA said that most eligible children were attending school. Whilst elsewhere in the County attendance by children who had social workers was not always good, that was not the case at Newick School. There were likely to be safeguarding disclosures when all the children returned to school and staff would make listening a big focus of their interactions.

6.11 MW said that the matter of the child who the LA had placed in another school against parental wishes and was technically, on the pupil roll for Newick School, remained ongoing. In her absence, RB had attended a meeting on the subject with the LA. The amount of work that this matter increasingly generated for NA and AC had given cause for concern and all correspondence had now been diverted to another email address. One example was a document requiring answers to 70 points. The LA, who were the subject of many of the issues raised, had taken responsibility for this and engaged a Solicitor who had replied to the 70 points. The school had been told the previous day that another batch of questions was being sent.

6.12 KR and JL had carried out a mainly outside based, Health and Safety visit which was entirely satisfactory.

7. Governor Visits going forward (Agenda Item 6)

7.1 MW said that she had been able to visit school in her positions as Chair and Diocesan Advisor. She said that details of Governors' roles and responsibilities would be circulated and she read them out to the meeting. Governors were asked to liaise with NA and AC regarding visits and one should be made each term by all Governors and reported on. NA was developing a template based on Ofsted questions, the SDP (School Development Plan) and SEF (School Self Evaluation) which she would send out to Governors. MW said that the Diocesan Inspections or SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) would be likely to follow Ofsted lead for visits timetables.

ACTION: NA

Circulate to Governors template report for Governor Visits
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8. Teaching School activity (Agenda Item 7)

8.1 NA said that normal Teaching School activity had stopped but Sarah Sipula, the Teaching School Director, had done some maths work remotely and attended a meeting also using a media platform. She said that there would be no teaching school arrangements in a years' time. She had been contracted to carry out some work at a school in the Polegate area and would be allowed to assign elements of the work to other staff. The income would go direct to Newick School.

9. Policy Procedures (Agenda Item 8)

9.1 Dealt with at Item 6.2 above.

10. Chair's Notes (Agenda Item 9)

10.1 MW said that Brighton and Hove schools were facing difficulties because a lack the lack of money and in some cases this was severe. Ofsted were not going to ignore the need for a rich curriculum that provided for a 'catch-up' process. There was discussion about what could be learned from the school's pandemic period experience that could be carried forward. This led to JJ offering to take any matters to the LA Schools Forum, of which she was a member and who would be meeting in July.

11. Any other business (Agenda Item 10)

11.1 None.

12. Date of Next Meeting

12.1 It was decided to hold a further FGB meeting during the term and it was arranged for Tuesday 14th July at 9.30am.