

**MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY**  
18:30-20:00 on Thursday 11 March 2021 [on Teams]

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**MINUTES**

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**Actions list**

Item	Action	by whom	by when	Status
<b>Meeting of 11 March</b>				
11.	Meet to review SLA with Wellington	Mike, June, Tim M	1 April	
11.	Confirm to LA continued arrangement	Tim M	1 April	
14.	Update GIAS	Mark / Sandra	1 April	

**Meeting notes****1. Welcome – especially to new staff governor**

Governors welcomed especially Vicky Pearson, who has recently been elected staff governor, and reiterated their thanks to Jen Gresswell for her service and contributions as staff governor.

**2. Apologies**

None; all present

**3. Declarations of interest**

None

**4. Head teacher's report**

Governors noted that the situation in school has been dominated by Covid-19 and health & safety since all children returned to school from 8 March. All year groups are now back, and each class is being maintained as a separate 'bubble', with some staff movement across 'bubbles' (as permitted by current DfE guidelines); this is kept to a minimum to reduce the impact of any 'bubble' closures. It has not been an easy start, mainly because of reduced staffing levels; the definition of 'clinically vulnerable' has widened since the previous lockdown, and the guidance now no longer allows the school to employ people across different settings; the school is therefore having to provide the same level of teaching and learning as before, but with fewer staff. While the school would prefer to retain class 'bubbles', governors noted that this will be kept under review and the school may need to revert to year group 'bubbles'. Apart from this, most things remain the same as in the previous full opening, and catch-up interventions are re-starting for those pupils who need it most.

Children seem pleased to be back, notwithstanding some understandable tiredness, emotions and readjustment. All children except for 4 have returned (because of their or their household's clinical vulnerability) and attendance is good, as is parental compliance with the new arrangements. A number of children have already had to be sent home for displaying Covid-19 symptoms, presumably because cold and other viruses are still circulating; so far no-one has tested positive. All children who are not in school can access bi-weekly work packs on the website (now that lessons are no longer being delivered online via Purple Mash). Attendance can now be sub-categorised, including that under Code C (Authorised Absence), which includes those who are absent because of clinical vulnerability or isolation.

**5. Resources & finance**

Period 11 (end-February) shows slightly reduced expenditure (90% *cf.* 91.67%), and around £2,500 more income than expected; the carry-forward for the end of the financial year is expected to be around £280k. Sandra will be working on the 2021/22 budget during April for submission by the end of the year, and this will be subject to approval at the next meeting.

There have not been any significant staffing changes (other than the short-staffing challenge noted above). Two sports apprentices will be joining the team after Easter (subject to final confirmation), working initially with class 'bubbles' and then deployed to KS1 and KS2. They will also be providing after-school clubs when this is possible, and helping with reading. This is being funded from Sports Premium. As has been previously noted, the head teacher is leaving at the end of April, and the deputy head teachers will jointly be acting head teachers for the remainder of the academic year.

## **6. Health & safety**

Contractors were in school during the February half-term break for various compliance tests, including PAT testing, security alarm service and hall curtain service. The gate has been fixed and the roof repaired, and two new interactive TVs and new wall bars have been installed.

The fire doors and 19 external doors will be serviced and fixed where necessary during the Easter holidays. It was confirmed that no additional Covid-19 top-up funding is available e.g. for servicing doors that are having to be used much more frequently as part of the Covid-19 arrangements.

## **7. Safeguarding / Child protection**

Lucy Jones (family support manager) is now on maternity leave, and Hannah Smith-Hughes is now taking the lead. Hannah is based in school, and all safeguarding procedures are running as they should. All teachers and nearly all the support staff have completed their Level 2 safeguarding training. The school has subscribed to MyConcern (a safeguarding programme which is used by a number of other schools including EMC, which will also save time on the transition to high school) for an initial two-year period (with a 50% discount for the first year). The LAC annual report will be completed by the end of Spring term, and governors noted the support available through the LA's family support worker Emmy Newton.

Governor queried whether Lucy's maternity leave is being back-filled, and it was confirmed that while Hannah is taking the lead with safeguarding Christy Elliott (who has to work from home) is doing more work on other areas such as attendance and behaviour, monitoring all the children who are off with symptoms or because of clinical vulnerability, coordinating return dates etc.). Hannah is liaising well with the DSL and DDSLs and the new arrangement is working well.

## **8. Well-being**

Staff well-being is enhanced by the confidential support services provided by the staff absence insurance, and Sandra has led staff training in health & safety and fire drills. Two members of staff are undergoing Early Literacy Support training (10 sessions delivered over 3 weeks) to support individual interventions. Class teachers and parents identify children who need this support and refer them to Vanessa Watts (SENCo and mental health champion). The school has used catch-up funding to purchase NESSIE (an online platform used in school to help with catch-up for SEND pupils. This is proving to be an excellent tool for supporting literacy and is expected to be extended beyond the initial trial groups (years 3-5).

Governors asked about staff morale. Some were quite anxious about returning to school, but all are enjoying having the children back in class rather than teaching online, and the good levels of communication (emails and meetings) and preparation have really helped. The school feels almost back to normal – or at least a 'new normal'.

## **9. School Development Plan**

Governors acknowledged the impact of Covid-19 on the SDP; some things cannot be done, and a re-prioritisation is necessary to address the new reality of gaps in progress and attainment. Staff are catching up with objectives and will be ready to progress the criteria which determine the focus of core subject teaching for the rest of the year. Work already done around the wider curriculum and mental health have really helped to support the new reality, and the SDP will be revisited in the Summer term.

Governors queried the normal pattern of school development planning, which is mostly annual from September, though some schools tie their SDPs to the financial year and some have multi-year SDPs. They acknowledged that with the current restrictions, staffing levels, and pressure on staff, it is not easy to be strategic for the rest of this academic year and agreed to take stock during the Summer term and reframe the SDP accordingly from September. It is likely that there will be a stronger focus on English and Maths than usual, including delivering English and Maths through other subjects. Assessments will help to identify the required priorities and approaches.

## **10. Curriculum, assessments and data**

Assessments will not take place until the Summer term and will prioritise Phonics, KS1 and SATs, and especially for Phonics and KS1 will include staff predictions. There will be no data available for the Spring term as students are only in school for less than 3 weeks. There will be a parents'

evening this term, which will also give an opportunity to understand how home-schooling has gone. The Early Years baseline conducted at the start of the year is now being redone (for core subject areas), and the catch-up programme for all year groups will be rolled out based on previous data and teachers' observations. The end-of-year reports will be live by the Easter holidays.

Governors questioned the difference in provision during the latest lockdown compared with the previous one. Remote learning was much more intense and rigorous this time; teachers were responding to feedback and questions from children and parents. Parents had previously found it more difficult to support their children with Maths, so this was changed to a new online system (White Rose), which has worked better at home. Purple Mash worked effectively, and online teaching gave an opportunity to see how well children were engaging. One child in particular was not engaging with online school (despite telephone calls to support), but otherwise engagement has been good, and while some pupils have stayed at the same level as pre-lockdown some have also made good progress. Governors appreciated how well teachers have responded, adapted, and delivered high-quality teaching online, with frequent communication with families. Governors queried whether staff have noticed a wider gap in pupil progress, and while this is likely to be the case this will also be the focus for catch-up.

#### **11. Update on Service Level Agreement with Wellington Primary School**

Governors agreed that Tim M will raise the SLA with Julie and confirm to the LA that the arrangement is continuing. Mike, June and Tim M will meet to review the SLA.

#### **12. Head teacher recruitment update**

Governors agreed that in the absence of anything substantive or prejudicial to be discussed, Helen L and Helen R would not need to leave the meeting. It was confirmed that head teacher interviews were delayed to avoid an online recruitment process, and interviews will now be held on 16th April. This gives time for notice to be given by anyone who is required to do so by 30th April. There are four candidates, and the selection panel previously agreed in principle by governors, including two external non-voting members, has now been confirmed. The chair had written personally to one unsuccessful candidate and had a convivial exchange of views.

#### **13. Joint acting head teachers' voting policy**

Governors agreed that the acting head teachers would have 1 vote between them, and that in the unlikely event that they were not able to agree how to cast this vote the chair would either defer the matter to a future meeting or have the casting vote.

#### **14. GIAS update**

It was noted that the school's GIAS entry needs is out-of-dated, and all agreed that Mark and Sandra will ensure that this has been correctly updated.

#### **15. Minutes of previous meetings & matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda**

As this was the first formal meeting of the full governing body since 20 October 2020, governors reiterated their unanimous approval of the minutes of last full governing body meeting (20 October 2020) and confirmed their unanimous approval of interim extraordinary meetings (4 November 2020, 2 December 2021 and 29 January 2021), including confidential annexes where appropriate. All previous actions have been completed, and there were no outstanding matters arising not already addressed elsewhere.

#### **16. Any other business**

Governors expressed their huge thanks to Tim M, for whom this was his final governors' meeting, noting his cool head and collegiate leadership which had spearheaded the school's substantial improvement journey over the last eight years, and to Helen L and Helen R who have played such a significant leadership role alongside Tim. Tim M also expressed his thanks for the support received from the previous and current chairmen, and from both deputy head teachers and all the leadership team and staff, and looks forward to the school's continued growth from strength to strength beyond his tenure.

#### **17. Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 19th May 2021, 6:30pm

[meeting ended 8pm]