

MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY

18:30 on Wednesday 19 May 2021 (remotely)

MINUTES

1. Welcome & apologies

Apologies were noted from June Willis, and the new joint headteachers were welcomed in their new role. The chair highlighted the current vacancies on the governing body, and will discuss this at the next meeting.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Head teachers' appointment update

Governors noted that previous minutes had confirmed the appointment of Helen and Helen as joint acting headteachers from 1 May 2021, and agreed unanimously (proposed by Tom and seconded by Mike) that given that Helen had now been appointed as joint substantive headteachers this permanent appointment as joint headteachers should begin on 1 May 2021.

4. Head teachers' report

Helen and Helen have talked through how the job-share will work (see also note in confidential annex) and have spoken to staff and written to all parents/carers. Both are completely accountable and will share responsibility for teaching and learning, staffing, finances etc., though on paper (e.g. as point of contact for the police or fire service) Helen L will be the headteacher from Mondays through Wednesday mornings and Helen R from Wednesday afternoons to Fridays. Helen L is the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and Helen R the Deputy DSL. Governors agreed with this approach.

Helen and Helen meet every Monday morning to update the to-do list and to ensure effective communication, and they have a shared area on the computer system so that both can see who has said what to whom. Given the large number of emails (40-60 a day), Helen L takes the lead on responding to emails for EYFS and KS1 and Helen R for KS2, but each copies the other into the response to ensure transparency.

The headteachers met with HR in the week of 10 May to discuss the return to school of clinically vulnerable staff, with individual Risk Assessments for each staff member which have been approved by HR and the staff concerned. The SENCo has returned, as is a teacher who has been breast-feeding. Two staff members cannot return due to their extreme clinical vulnerability, and two are on maternity leave. Pregnant staff may now return up to the 28th week of the pregnancy, and governors noted the new guidance on shared parental leave, with up to three breaks in a year balancing term-time and holiday absence. Staff may also work across two settings (including WPS).

The headteachers have looked at the management structure, compared it with larger local primary schools, and discussed it with LPS' partner school at Boxgrove in Surrey and with the assistant headteachers. They are also looking at the support staff structure given the implications of these changes, and will bring the management and staffing structure plan to the next meeting.

4 children have moved away since the start of term, and 1 (EAL) child has moved to a small village school. 3 children will be joining Year 4: 1 from out of county, 1 from overseas, and 1 who is more local.

Governors noted the following positions which are currently being recruited: some PPA and TA cover (across various year groups), 2 full-time positions in KS2 (but not Year 6), 1 full-time class teacher in KS1, and a cleaner. Short-listing will take place before the May half-term break.

Governors discussed the plan to open a nurture group hub for north Herefordshire schools at LPS and queried the impact on LPS. This would be a class for 8 children (50% from LPS), with a teacher and TA, and is based on the impact of researched, structured intervention at an early stage on preventing the need for longer-term SEMH provision. Children would spend mornings in the nurture class and afternoons with their wider year group. Governors recognised the positive impact both on children and on LPS' PAN, and approved a nurture hub from September 2021, provided that it is fully funded by the Local Authority.

There were two positive Covid-19 cases on 1 May but no bubbles had to be closed, because of the bank holiday. One child had been sent to school on the bus before his Mum had tested positive but there was no record of whom the child had been sitting next to. In the other case, the whole family had tested positive. Public Health England is happy with the approach taken by the school.

Breakfast club is open and year-group bubbles operate at play time and lunchtime. Apprentices in Years 4 and 5 will now be able to work across a whole year group. After-school clubs are expected after the half-term holiday (beginning with outdoor clubs such as sport and gardening) and full wrap-around care for students from Nursery to Year 6 is expected from September. This will meet a real need given that Bargates has not offered additional nursery hours since the start of the pandemic. School tours for new parents are expected to take place, after the school day.

Current attendance is 94.6%; this is mostly due to children who are expected to be in school because of vulnerability but who are at home. LPS has been sharing an Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) with EMC but EMC has now terminated his contract so LPS may need to provide its own EWO. Governors agreed not to fine parents if holidays originally scheduled during school holidays have now been rescheduled by the holiday provider to fall during term-time.

There has been one 4-day exclusion (due to escalating violence against a member of staff) of a pupil who had moved from another school in an effort to avoid permanent exclusion. This pupil has now been offered an intervention place at Brookfield in September.

Reception numbers are now at 77, and a further 5 have been identified who should be on LPS's list, so hopefully the intake will be around 80, a good cohort for LPS. Governors noted that numbers often increase in January and discussed ways to increase the numbers such as a video tour of the nursery for social media, posters up around town, and Facebook advertising.

Governors noted the challenges with catering provider AIP and the current plans to explore a range of options, including alternative providers and other on-site provision models.

5. Teaching & learning

Tracey Kneale from Marlbrook has been working to support teaching and learning at both LPS and WPS and has offered to mentor Helen and Helen and to support teaching and learning. She has a wealth of experience and has been very supportive, and has offered training for middle leaders.

From 24 May, Helen and Helen will be doing learning walks at LPS and WPS, to gain an overview in leading teaching and learning and to inform SDP and training needs. Reading and maths training have both been conducted during May 2021. The Write Stuff is being trialled in Year 2, and the English coordinator has done a lot of research; this is expected to improve enthusiasm for writing with its approach of combining short intensive learning, applied writing, and inspiration days which give real-life experience. Data and progress so far indicated that this will be introduced across the school, with staff training from September. The assistant headteachers are doing a book scrutiny for curriculum content, progress, consistency and marking (recognising that there has not been much marking because of Covid).

The new RSE curriculum is a statutory requirement from September; a draft policy has been shared with governors, and an audit of the RSE and PSHE curricula will be conducted by Victoria Blakemore on 21 May 2021. This will then be shared with parents and governors. Vicky will be

delivering the RSE curriculum and has gone through all the content with Catherine Fletcher and Olivia Thomas, and all the resources have been provided. Governors queried whether a parent questionnaire and a link governor / working party would help to support the implementation of this new curriculum.

Purple Mash is offering training on coding, Accelerated Reader and the SEN programme. Each classroom requires a computer, and staff need laptops for home working, so the school no longer has all 30 laptops in one computer suite, has bought 15 iPads, and is working with IT support (Simon Eades from Wigmore) to confirm ongoing IT needs so that these can be planned. Interactive whiteboards are also beginning to fail, and a combination of PC and TVs (rather than projectors) is being sought for every classroom. The PTA will be approached for additional funding.

Year 2 and 6 pupils have been doing end-of-year assessments which are not the same as normal SATs but give sufficient indication of progress and attainment for primary and secondary schools. Governors noted the lack of standardised expectation by high schools of information required about Year 6 leavers. Data for all year groups will be updated in the week of 24 May and again at the end of term, and will inform end-of-year reports.

The school has also had its first post-lockdown assembly! This was online, with separate KS1 and KS2 groups, but went very well and was well received.

Governors expressed their warm appreciation of a full report on teaching and learning after a year which has been so dominated by risk assessments and changing government guidance during the pandemic.

6. Resources & finance

Given the reduction in children from 564 (2018-19) to 510, discussions with HR about staffing have dominated the 2021-22 budgeting process, considering staffing needs, value for money, cost-cutting, and the desire to avoid redundancies. A structure is now in place which produces a surplus budget within five years. This requires a reduction of one class, reflecting the different year group sizes, resulting in a mixed Year 2-3 class in September 2021. Year group sizes in Years 3 and 5 in September 2022 may require a further reduction. The carry-forward of £282k in 2020-21 will diminish in the next two years, improve in year 3, diverge in year 4 and then converge in year 5. This position will of course improve if more children join the school. Some of the capital carry-forward will be required for IT equipment. Governors were satisfied that the 5-year budget represents a realistic figure and protects the current staff team, and noted the need to increase numbers, to which hopefully new housing will contribute.

Helen and Helen are discussing with SENCOs the needs for TAs to address needs in phonics, speech & language, behaviour, EAL etc., including the top-up up 1:1 support provided by the current SEN team. TAs have permanent variable contracts, to reflect changes in 1:1 provisions when children with additional needs leave the school, so hours can be fluctuated and will be looked at through the summer. Governors appreciated the added value of TAs and the impact this has on progress, and the support from site manager Adrian, a former policeman.

The 2021-22 was approved (proposed by Rebecca and seconded by Tom). Governors also agreed to delegate the SFVS approval to the chair.

7. Safeguarding / Child protection

There are nine children who have a Child Protection Plan or are designated Children in Need, and several with EHAs (which be accepted or declined by parents). 15 families are supported by Family Social Worker Emmy Newton FSW (funded jointly by the LA and LPS), five families were offered Early Help (which one family declined and from which the other four have subsequently disengaged). Two children have been escalated to Child Protection in the last year.

8. Health & safety

Twenty fire doors were overhauled during the Easter holidays, which has made a real improvement, and there is now a rolling programme for annual maintenance and repair of doors.

The school continues its attempts to gain a password for the Breathing Building System, so that maintenance can be conducted by another firm which would charge much less than the £5-£6k service fee charged by the company which installed the system (and password-protected it).

There have been normal fire alarm and other maintenance checks (e.g. Legionella's disease), and a problem with the shutter in the kitchen has now been resolved.

A quotation to resurface the area with a pothole (hence the cones) has now been received.

9. Well-being

There will be a meeting with a well-being coach in the week of 24 May to plan the next academic year, and the headteachers' recent breakfast meeting with staff provided an opportunity to share well-being initiatives. PPA time from home (one day per fortnight) has been well received, and has increased productivity, and will continue for at least the 2021-22 autumn term.

10. Moving forward with potential federation

Governors noted that the SLA between LPS and WPS had initially been put in place with a to future federation, but this had been put on hold by Covid-19 and staff changes. WPS governors are keen to move to a federated model, and LPS governors agreed that they were minded to move towards a federation and that this should be discussed early in the new academic year. Governors recognised the need to ensure the buy-in of both school communities and of the Local Authority (which had been in touch again on 19 May about future plans).

11. Minutes of previous meetings & matters arising not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 16 April 2021 were unanimously approved.

12. Any other business

Governors were satisfied that due diligence is being conducted with regard to purchasing new playground equipment and delegated the final choice to the Senior Leadership Team.

It was agreed that policies will be approved remotely to allow sufficient time for review by governors.

Governors noted that there are still two parent governor vacancies and further room for more governors (as at WPS). Mike has been in touch with county councillor Tracy Marsh, and two potential parent governors were suggested. Governors agreed that any approaches should be made directly to Mike.

13. Date of next meeting

6:30 pm on 6 July 2021.

14. Head teachers' working arrangements

Helen and Helen left the meeting, and the subsequent discussion and decisions are noted in a confidential annex.