

Ashmount Primary School
Extraordinary Governing Body Meeting
1st June 2020
Minutes

Members:

Dean James-Robbins (Chair of Governors)
Anthony Carmel (Headteacher)
Georgie Dimov
Kate Peers
Gaelyn Fuhrmann
Nicholas Bateman
Louise Smyth
David Barry
Jescinta James
Sharon Turney

Also Attending

Tony McNamara – Clerk

1. Chair's welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. No apologies for absence had been received.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded to declare any interests relating to any items on the Agenda. No declarations were noted.

3. Chair's summary – purpose of meeting

Dean explained that the purpose of the meeting was to provide governors with an opportunity to listen to the proposed plans for the return to school which Tony would set out later in the meeting. Governors would be encouraged ask questions regarding both home and school learning; per the guidance previously circulated and to consider the proposed risk assessment, pupil progress, financial implications of the lockdown and the impact on both pupil and staff well-being.

It was noted that government advice had stated that schools should be ready to re-open *from* 1st June, but *not necessarily on* 1st June 20 and that the actual date for re-opening would be at the school's discretion.

4. Headteacher's report re return to school arrangements

Tony began by commenting on the local context regarding government proposals for return of years 1, 6 and Reception from 1st June 20. Governors noted that a return on 1st June was not considered to be appropriate for the school and that a proposed date of 8th June 20 was suggested but restricted to year groups 1 and 6 only; reception year return would be deferred until the 15th June.

Pupils returning to school on 8th June would be separated in to "pods" of a maximum of 14 per pod. Social distancing measures to be introduced included different break and lunch times for each pod. Lunch would be provided and served in the classrooms and at the separate break times pupils would not be able to play any contact games. Parents would not be allowed in school and there would be staggered drop off and collection times for different pods.

A risk assessment regarding return to school arrangements had been prepared and shared with the LA and with parent consultation. Information regarding the new timetable had been provided to both parents and staff. Consultation with year 1 parents would follow and then reception year parents. A few areas of the risk assessment were still to be finalised to resolve queries concerning hand dryers and use of toilet facilities.

The risk assessment had also taken into account staff well- being issues including measures to support staff returning safely such as paying for taxi fares to and from school.

Based on parental consultation regarding parents who were happy for their children to return to school on 8th June, Tony advised that this had indicated that 31/60 Year 6 children would be attending on 8th June, along with all key workers and two children with EHCPs. It was noted that some children with EHCPs had very complex needs and would be unable to manage social distancing measures. The number of children returning on the first day varied across different LBI schools and Hugh Myddleton, another two-form entry school, had advised that only 9 children would be returning.

The school behaviour policy had been amended to include procedures for social distancing and to provide assurance to families that pupils would continue to be supported in their home learning, particularly the most vulnerable pupils. The policy recognised the importance of ensuring pupils' well - being was maintained and every effort would be made to minimise any stress caused by problems accessing the on-line Google Class system.

With the phased return of year groups to school, the school would continue with the current learning offer and number of home learning assignments.

Dean thanked Tony for the overview of the proposed arrangements and governors were then given the opportunity to comment on and ask questions about the plans.

5. Summary of issues raised following governor questions

- *When would all year groups be back in school?*

It was noted that this was not known at present but was not considered to be viable by the end of Summer term with the current model of pods and the existing staffing numbers.

- *Would staff need to wear PPE in school?*

PPE was available for staff to use where it was considered appropriate along with other medical supplies and first aid equipment.

- *Would the learning offer for Google Class be changed to allow for those groups not returning before the end of Summer term?*

The school were currently reviewing this and the number of learning assignments was likely to reduce from five to three per week. Assignments covered relevant curriculum work in English, Maths and Reading. Some daily supplementary tasks would be set but were not expected to be handed in.

- *When would children receive feedback and contact from teachers regarding their home learning?*

There had been daily interaction with pupils during the school closure and additional calls to families would be scheduled going forward along with other support and interventions especially for the most vulnerable families.

- *Does the school feel that they are well supported by the LA regarding advice and strategic decision making on a safe return to school for all pupils?*

The LA had provided a lot of support and a very positive approach during the school closure period and plans for return to school. However, there was some concern from schools and other networks that there had been a lack of clarity in guidance provided and that other LAs were adopting different return to school strategies.

- *How would staff meetings and communications with staff be managed on return to school?*

Training was being provided for staff regarding managing social distancing and Google meetings. Face to face and whole team meetings would continue where possible, to maintain staff morale. It was noted that staff

and unions seemed happy with the proposed return to school date of 8th June.

- *When will the risk assessment be shared with governors?*

The risk assessment would be circulated to governors when finalised and would be subject to a weekly review and would be updated according to latest advice and best practice following on-going dialogue with the LA, parents and staff.

- *What strategies will be in place to ensure that progress gaps in learning between dis-advantaged and non dis-advantaged groups will be reviewed and gaps reduced going forward?*

This would be a key focus for the school as all year groups return to school and it was recognised that careful planning would be required; to cover key skills and all curriculum areas and to ensure that appropriate interventions and support were in place for the most vulnerable pupils. Tony explained that over the next few weeks, the school would be looking to develop a “recovery curriculum” covering all key skills. It was agreed that this was an area which the Teaching and Learning committee could discuss further at their next meeting. It was also agreed that Tony would circulate the recovery curriculum podcast to staff.

- *Had there been any financial implications impacting on the budget since lockdown?*

It was noted that the school had not incurred any additional costs not budgeted for. There had been savings in some areas, e.g. reduction in staff overtime costs and other staffing cover costs.

- *What steps were being taken to promote and ensure staff and pupil well-being and mental health?*

SLT were considering options including provision of budget resources to fund additional support measures to build resilience and moral, for example, gift vouchers on staff birthdays. Plans were in place to provide support for pupil mental health and well-being including, continued use of Place2BE, and encouraging regular video links to interact as much as possible.

- *Were children still required to wear uniform when returning to school?*

Tony advised that uniform requirements would be relaxed and it would not be mandatory for pupils to wear uniform.

6. Actions agreed

RESOLVED that

- The Risk Assessment Plan be circulated to governors when outstanding final queries raised by the LA had been addressed;
- The risk assessment be subject to weekly scrutiny by SLT and be updated as and when appropriate based on the latest guidance and best practice available;
- The latest version be considered at the next full governing body meeting;
- Plans and strategies to address reducing the progress gap between advantaged and dis-advantaged pupil groups going forward be discussed at the next Teaching and Learning meeting and any recommendations arising be circulated to governors for further discussion at the next governing body meeting;
- The recovery curriculum and a copy of the recovery curriculum podcast be circulated to governors.

ACTION: TONY, DEAN, T&L COMMITTEE.

7. Items to remain confidential

RESOLVED that none of the above items remain confidential.

Agreed as a correct record of the meeting

Signed..... (Chair of Governors)

Date.....