



St George's Primary School

Full Governor Body Meeting

Thursday 21st May 2020

Lower Site Main Hall 5:30pm

Present

Community Governors

P. Walters
B. Clark
M. Wiggins
J. Marshall (On-Line)
A. Ward (On-Line)
A. Lee

Parent Governors

C. Scott
C. Lucking

FGB Chair

Staff Governors

B. Cassidy
H. Rice

Head Teacher

Also Present

K. Choudhary
T. Skarratts-Jackson
L. Binks
L. Horton
M. Chambers (On-Line)
C. Roberts

Clerk

Apologies

P. Dunning
A. Vickers

Item 1 Welcome, Apologies and declarations of AoB

Noted and received as above.

Item 2 Declaration of any business or pecuniary interests

There was no declaration of any business or pecuniary interests.

Item 3 Minutes of previous meeting and action points

Minutes accepted as a true and accurate record.

All actions from previous meeting have been completed or are to be discussed in the meeting.

Meeting schedule: FGB reminded that SC, R&PC and C&PC meetings are cancelled for the remainder of the academic year, in favour of two additional FGB meetings. At the previous meeting, the two FGB meetings were scheduled for the summer term; Thursday 7th May and Thursday 4th June, however given the fluidity of the current landscape (and in anticipation of further government announced on Thursday 7th May), the decision was taken to move the proposed FGB meeting forward two weeks, as follows;

- Thursday 21st May – 5:30pm
- Thursday 18th June – 5:30pm

Item 4 COVID-19 Strategy Update

Circulated as part of the papers.

SLT delivered presentation given to all school staff members which addresses the challenges facing the school as it looks to adhere to the recent government announcement on [making plans or a school reopening and managing COVID-19](#). The presentation covered;

- Recent Government Announcements
- Timeline
- COVID-19 Alert Levels
- Current Government Strategy
- What we know about COVID-19
- Managing Transmission
- Human Transmission
- Transmission Controls
- Adult to Adult Transmission Central to R Figure
- Hygiene and Transmission
- High Risk Areas
- Should schools consider opening?
- Other control measures

SLT stated that they have been working hard with all staff to begin the preparation for the school re-opening and that is being guided by two simple principles outlined in the letter sent to parents on 14th May;

1. Do the best that we can for our school community.
2. We ensure the highest standards of safety in our planning.

FGB informed that SLT met with the five Trade Union school stakeholder organisations today with regards to opening the school. They scrutinised the school's risk assessments in detail. The meeting went well and SLT stated that they welcomed the dialogue given the school is one on the first schools locally to be opening their doors.

SLT suggested that the government advice and guidance has been coming in 'thick and fast' however given the sheer amount of policy documentation (and the fact the much information has been siloed into a number of individual documents) it has been a challenge to keep abreast of the most recent guidance.

SLT stated that it is important to recognise that the school is operating under very difficult circumstances and that staff cannot ever remember education being at the forefront of the media in such a negative way.

SLT stated that Wirral LA's decision to support individual school decision has created much confusion. The school is trying to move forward in a considered way to best support the school community – whilst keeping the highest standards of safety as possible. As such, educationalist staff have had to broaden their knowledge base to become familiar with Personal Protective Equipment (**PPE**) and hygiene measures.

SLT highlighted that the government's proposal is that children will come back to school in smaller classes. These are what are being referred to as 'pods'. There will be 15 children in each pod with at least one member of staff. The aim is that the children spend as much time as possible in their pod to control risk and limit possible transmission of any viruses.

SLT suggested that school staff are comfortable planning for that model and they are confident with the science that shows that children are currently at low risk from Covid-19 and that we can limit transmission with effective control. SLT have run the same model for the 'emergency school' over the last eight weeks.

FGB informed that the main challenge in bringing more children back to school is that 'pods' would need to become more restricted in their movement. More children result in more controls to ensure the highest standards of safety. Children will learn, eat and play within their pod. There will be limited times when they mix with children or staff from other pods.

SLT stated that they are constantly being challenged on 'why is the school opening now?' given the conflicting messaging from Trade Unions and the fact that other schools are not opening now. SLT have been very clear that; if the government dictates it is not safe and Wirral Public Health agree then, the school would not be opening. The school is not taking decisions unilaterally 'in a bubble' and is guided by the COVID-19 alert levels and subsequent guidance.

FGB informed that, in order to open the school as per the guidance, the school has had to close Dragon Club as it cannot provide the highest standards of safety with the increase number of pupils on site.

SLT suggested that managing transmission is key and as such, is delivering training for staff to mitigate the risk.

FGB informed that creation of bespoke Risk Assessment has been a huge task and has not simply been 'pulled off the shelf'. The challenges have been significant and include;

- Lack of space at lower site
- Shortage of staff. Each pod will need at least one member of staff to teach and care for the children. Normal staff team does not have enough capacity for this and the school also have staff who are unable to work on site because they are shielding.
- Very small communal spaces at lower site. Separate play space and play time for pods will be limited.
- Restricted entrances and exits at lower site. The school does not have the space for parents to be on site. Restricting adults on site and maintaining adult social distancing is absolutely crucial in our safety plan. This means that parents and children will have to adapt to being dropped off and collected at the school gate. It also means that our year groups will have different start and finish times.

- Implications for before and after school care. The school cannot maintain the safety requirements of a large pod model and have children mixing in different clubs before and after school.
- Supporting children to work with new staff and ensuring highest standards of safety, safeguarding and emotional support. New teachers and staff means a new start for many of our children. It may also mean a new classroom.
- Relocating our school again. Our emergency school has been operating every day including holidays. Last day will be 29th May. We need to create our pods and relocate furniture and equipment.

FGB informed that Wirral LA granted permission to use road closures as part of the measures towards safety. This will involve closing St George's Road at end of day collections so the school can restrict the number of adults on site and promote essential adult social distancing. The school is also working on times and systems for pedestrian movement.

FGB asked if the school has been charged for the creation of road signage?

RESOLUTION: No.

FGB asked when the pod system is implemented, will there be an attempt to keep pupils in their existing classes for continuity?

RESOLUTION: FGB remained that the school has seen out parent questionnaire to try and gauge pupil number returning on 1st June and depending the results of the questionnaire, SLT will endeavour to mirror pre-existing classes if possible, however this is will be a difficult task dependant of the number of response across the cohort being invited back into school.

FGB asked is the school considering a phased return for more year groups from 21st June?

RESOLUTION: SLT stated that this could be considered dependant of government advice moving forward, but suggested there any a significant amount of logistical considerations to be modelled around, for example, the amount of space for more pods.

FGB asked if the school has written to local residents regarding the plans surrounding road closures?

RESOLUTION: No. SLT have (as of yet) been unable to write to local residents as Wirral LA have not confirmed the road closure timings. SLT stated that when these times have been confirmed, they will be sending consultation correspondence to parents and the local community.

FGB asked what are the plans to deal with parents who choose not to adhere to the plans implemented by the school, for example, when dropping pupils off at school as the proposed plans may 'not be convenient'?

RESOLUTION: SLT stated that the school's plans will be strictly adhered too and failure to work collaboratively with the school may result in pupils being withdrawn from school during the period of phased return. SLT stated that this is not a social issue, it is a public health issue and the school has endeavoured to be transparent to all stakeholder during the pandemic and explain the reasons for their actions.

C. Scott stated that she has been highly impressed with the level our transparency across the school in all communication, correspondence and stakeholder meetings she has attended and

thanked all staff for their endeavours. It was suggested that all the school can do is present the options and hope that stakeholders recognise the challenges facing the school and act accordingly. As chair, her full support is behind the school and FGB echoed the sentiment.

FGB asked if the school can the school identify which parents have responded to the parent survey with the view of identifying if any vulnerable groups have not engaged?

RESOLUTION: SLT stated that the safeguarding team have been proactively targeting vulnerable group from the very outset of the pandemic.

FGB asked what proportion of vulnerable groups are attending the school?

RESOLUTION: SLT suggested that it has been a challenge but the school has managed to get the majority of pupils in.

FGB asked if any other WA schools have asked for assistance?

RESOLUTION: SLT stated that they have been working collaboratively with some WA and other schools.

FGB asked have SEND pupils been engaged?

RESOLUTION: SLT stated that this group has been encompassed in the vulnerable group as discussed above and the school has been working hard to get these learners into school.

FGB asked has there been any additional training for staff to help recognise and address mental health of pupils and the uncertainty of the current climate?

RESOLUTION: SLT stated that school is embracing training and have set up Mental Health support pages on the school's website.

Item 5 Budget Update

Circulated as part of the papers.

SLT stated that there are significant challenges with school budget in light of the current COVID-19 climate, highlighting substantial issues with income for Dragon Club and Catering. This issue is augmented by the need to furlough Dragon Club staff due to the implementation of the pod model. As such, the circulated budget is not an accurate reflection on the school current financial position.

SLT stated that the furloughing of Dragon Club staff will help the school safeguard jobs and the salaries for staff however the impact on the school and the loss of such a valuable service to the local community is huge.

FGB reminded that (pre COVID-19) the school had a forecasted a budget credit however in the current landscape the school will be forecasting a significant deficit.

FGB asked if the school can expect any Government financial assist to mitigate the financial burden?

RESOLUTION: SLT stated that the only additional funding being made available is the DfE [exceptional costs associated with COVID-19](#) which equates to £50k.

SLT stated that the budget will be significantly stripped back to make a c.£100k in savings moving forward and that they will come back to FGB with a revised and informed settings to include Dragon Club and Catering considerations.

DECISION TAKEN: FGB agreed that FGB Chair will sign off the revised Budget Period before sending to Wirral LA and that the budget will be discussed at the next FGB meeting.

SLT stated that they are very frustrated that the school's endeavours to get into a more robust financial position have now been annulled. As discussed in previous meeting, the school had ambitious plans to enrich learner experiences through an enhanced curriculum offer.

Item 6 Staffing Update

Circulated as part of the papers.

FGB informed that the school has not been able to re-new a number of fixed term contracts.

FGB informed that the school has recently appointed a new Assistant Head Teacher for Y5 & Y6. The recruitment process saw 19 applicants and 5 were shortlisted. SLT are really pleased with their chosen candidate and look forward to welcoming **Mr Sivagajan Sivathillainathan** (refers to himself Gaj Nathan) to the school in due course.

FGB reminded that SLT are working side by side with staff teams and smoothing the way ahead and that they see 1st June as a beginning of a process, not an end point. Changes will be phased in over many months.

B. Cassidy stated that SLT have been 'reset' and roles for transition and management of Covid-19 strategy will be:

- B. Cassidy: safety strategy, communication, risk assessment, external support
- C. Roberts: Business Management
- T. Skarratts-Jackson: support for vulnerable pupils including mental health and 'recovery curriculum'
- M. Chambers: plans for cohesive online support and remote learning after June.
- L. Binks: EYFS Curriculum and operational oversight
- L. Horton: KS1 Curriculum and operational oversight. Move back as team leader to oversee transition and plan for summer term into Autumn.
- T. Skarratts-Jackson: Y3-4 Curriculum and operational oversight.
- Mr Sivagajan Sivathillainathan Y5-6 Curriculum and operational oversight (B. Cassidy will support with transition to new AHT).

FGB asked how the school is going to manage transition of pupils?

RESOLUTION: SLT stated that this is a big challenge and SLT are modelling different options to meet the challenge. It was suggested that that Hi Impact may be commissioned to create a 'virtual' open day for new parents and pupils.

FGB asked if SLT need any Governor assistance in getting the school ready to welcome pupils?

RESOLUTION: SLT thanked FGB for the offer but most work have been done.

Item 7 AOB

DESCION TAKEN: FGB moved that upcoming FGB meeting from Thursday 18th June to;

- Thursday 25th June – 5:30pm

Item 8 Date of next meeting

Meeting finished at 7:15pm

Next meeting: Thursday 25th June @ 5:30pm

Page	Item	Summary of actions from meeting	Whom	Date to be completed