



Minutes

For the meeting of the Governing Board, Onslow Infant School Tuesday 31st March 2020 at 15:30 via video conference

Logged in:

Katy Peter	KP
Tony Lau-Walker	TLW
Jess Sinclair	JS
Sam Merchant	SM
Rosie Marsden-Farmer	RMF (left from the start of Item 7)
Steven Hill	SH (left at 16:30)
Amanda Pardoe	AP

In attendance:

Stacey Reynolds	SR (left from the start of item 7)
Sarah Churchill	Clerk

The meeting was quorate

1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Claire Morris, Ashley Harris, Kimberly Kywe, Tim Bevans</p>
2.	<p>POSTPONMENT OF ORIGINAL AGENDA AND NEW MEETING FOCUS</p> <p>The Chair asked governors to confirm they were happy to postpone the original agenda until the summer FGB to allow an update on the school's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. All Governors agreed this meeting would now focus on 4 core areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare for key workers and vulnerable children • Learning and support for children at home • Compliance issues • Establishing a new committee to enable effective governance during the closure.
3.	<p>UPDATE ON THE COVID19 SITUATION (including provision of childcare for key workers' children; support for vulnerable children and the provision of learning support to children at home)</p> <p>AP provided an update on the two weeks in school prior to the Government announcing schools would be closed to the majority of pupils. During this period the school was at 60% attendance due to students self-isolating or shielding. Therefore staff had started to prepare work that could be done at home by these pupils. They focused on a 1 page format that was emailed to students and placed on the website. Feedback was very good. This evolved into the learning support for all children at home after schools closed (discussed in more detail below)</p> <p>Childcare for key workers' children</p> <p>AP explained that Head Teachers were seeing Government announcements on the national news at the same time as members of the public – there was no prior notice. The Senior Leadership Team tried to keep informed and make a plans as announcements came in and predict what might happen next. One significant issue for schools was the Government announced schools would close at the end of the day Friday 20th March except for key workers and vulnerable children. This announcement was made on the 18th March but there was then a long delay in explaining what a key worker was and whether one or two parents needed to be a key worker making it very hard to prepare. In the end, AP send out a survey on Thursday evening with a best guess definition of a key worker. The survey was re-sent with the government advice which came out on Midnight that night. Initial indications were that childcare would be 25-30 children would need to use the facility. However, parents worked hard to keep their children at home where it was safe to do so and the actual numbers of children have been far less meaning only one classroom needed to be staffed.</p>



AP reported that Onslow had also worked with St Nicholas' School as they only had 2 children requiring childcare and many of their staff were self-isolating. Therefore those children were attending Onslow School at this time.

Operating and staffing the childcare provision

AP has focused on health and safety for staff on site. There is always a first aider and a DSL available (although that could be by phone) and everyone is following safeguarding procedures as normal. The school has been very fortunate to have lots of jobs shares so although staff were self-isolating there has been 20 staff available for the rota. By contrast St Nicholas' has 2 staff available to work and they have joined the rota.

The provision is running well. Social distancing measure have been put in place which is hard with the young children and handwashing is being regularly enforced at key points of the day. The teachers are doing activities and working through the same home learning packs provided for children at home.

Easter Holiday Childcare Provision for key workers' children

AP explained that the Easter Childcare Provision would be provided by the sports coach who covers some PPA, holiday camps and afterschool clubs on site. The school would be paying for this. There would be no food over provided over Easter. At this point, no parents had requested bank holiday care, however their shifts were subject to change.

Situation with Vulnerable Children

AP explained that the Inclusion Manager phoned and spoke to every family with a child with an EHCP or meeting the definition of vulnerable. All the families wanted to keep their child safe at home rather than risk exposing them to the virus so they were not in school. The Inclusion Manager is now in regular phone contact with these families providing support in addition to the support provided by the class teacher. The HSLW is also in regular phone contact with vulnerable families, e.g. supporting them to access a foodbank.

AP confirmed that she has personally bought and sent Tesco vouchers to the families of a number of PP children to ensure they could have their free school meal entitlement. The school's financial systems are closed as it is year-end so she would not be able to reclaim this money for some time. In addition 3 families had been collecting a packed lunch from the school site, provided by caterers at Queen Eleanor's instead of receiving the voucher. This arrangement had been in place for two weeks, However last night Government announced a new free school meals voucher scheme which AP would investigate and deliver as soon as possible. Governors were frustrated that delays to the Government scheme had resulted in the HT feeling compelled to use her personal credit card and were extremely grateful to AP for doing so.

Home learning

AP explained that SLT were now developing the plan for home learning plan for after Easter. AP has set up a survey for feedback on the first 2 weeks of learning sent home in order to see what was working and what wasn't working. Currently pupils are provided with on online pack sent by email and placed on the website on Monday morning. It comprised of a weekly overview of learning tasks, broken down into morning/afternoon activities. It was sent with the proviso that parents mustn't put themselves under undue pressure to complete the tasks at set times. AP reiterated that 20 minutes of 1:1 with a parent is very intense compared to the same length of time spent on the carpet with 30 children and that the school understood families were in very difficult situations.

JS queried how families were contacting teachers for support and whether it was working **AP explained** that families were contacting teacher via the office who are forwarding messages. From the schools perspective is important to protect staff from lots of out of hours contact. Also due to many staff working part time hours, being ill or being on the rota to be on site, staff are also working on a rota for replying to emails, so going via the office ensures the right person sees the email in a timely manner - otherwise it could sit unopened for a number of days.



	<p>SH highlighted that his family liked the format the school work set for home was taking. He said the daily breakdown with morning / afternoon activities gave structure. He also appreciated the overall message that the school understand this was a difficult time and families were not to 'beat themselves up' over the suggested learning.</p> <p>JS asked whether live video tuition would be possible as some other schools are doing this. AP said staff would be looking into this over their Easter breaks and were looking at recording stories and other content for our website/ you-tube. However, AP noted that an infant school teaches in a very different way to a junior school due to the age and stage of the pupils. Sitting a 4 year old in front of a streamed lesson is far more challenging than a year 6 child. AP also reminded governors that we don't provide our staff with laptops and many only have access to a smart phone. There were also safeguarding issues around some of the live streaming ideas.</p> <p>JS asked whether the school had done any planning for catch up/re-integration. AP explained the government hadn't indicated when schools would re-open so planning would have to wait until we knew more about how much schooling was missed. The home learning packs have been developed to focus on skills to help with future re-integration. However, the school knows the gap between children will be very big as some will have good quality 1:1 tuition and some will have nothing. The school will of course move on to a longer terms plans as time goes forward. However the initial focus had to be on setting up a childcare facility and producing some home learning.</p> <p>KP asked whether the SATS would be phased out a year early as this would help with planning. AP replied that the Government hadn't indicated either way so the focus needs to be on how to support our pupils now.</p> <p>TLW asked what would happen if a safeguarding issue about a child from St Nicholas' arose, in particular would we use our policy or St Nicholas' policies. AP responded that the basic principles and procedures are the same for every school, therefore we would still record on our forms and report to the MASH if urgent - but we would pass on the forms to St Nicholas' school for their records.</p> <p>AP wanted all Governors to be reassured after this update that TLW, KP and AP have discussions daily and these decisions hadn't been made in isolation but due to the rapidly changing situation urgent decisions had to be taken very quickly as Chair's Actions without updating all governors in real time.</p> <p>Governors wanted to record their gratitude to AP and all of the staff at Onslow for their hard work and dedication to the school at this time.</p>
4.	<p>NEW GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE</p> <p>KP put forward a proposal and suggested Terms of Reference for a new Governance and Leadership Committee to slim line leadership in this crisis and ensure the Governing Body can react quickly, whilst remaining transparent. The committee would also ensure the arrangements for leadership are clear if the Chair is ill. This committee would meet on an ad hoc basis and keep governors informed via a short bullet point email of any decisions taken. Any governor may be called up to contribute eventually – but initially the committee would be made of up the Co-Chairs, Vice Chair and Chair of the Finance Committee. It is hoped the Committee would continue after the crisis to formalise the meetings that already take place between the Co-Chairs and Head.</p> <p>All agreed the Governance and Leadership Committee should be established immediately using the proposed Terms of Reference.</p> <p>TWL noted that the last 2 weeks have been very difficult for AP and that, at some key times, KP had to give almost hourly support to the HT.</p>
5.	<p>FINANCE STAFFING AND PREMISIS COMMITTEE UPDATE</p>



	<p>Prior to the meeting the 3 Year Budget and explanatory notes had been circulated on the GVO for Governors to consider and raise any questions. As part of the new emergency procedures KP asked governors to consider and vote on the approval of the 3 year budget and all governors present agreed to adopt this change of procedure and went on to approve the 3 year budget to remove the requirement to have a Finance Committee meeting followed by another full board to approve the budget separately.</p> <p>The budget had been approved in spite of the financial situation going forward looking dire. In light of the tricky financial situation building up, TLW explained he had been speaking to AP about an option to open a nursery provision at the school which would help mitigate but not clear the financial difficulties to come in subsequent years. TLW asked AP to outline the ideas discussed with the co-chairs in a previous week.</p> <p>AP further explained that the proposed nursery would be for up to 24 two to four years olds in two of the empty classrooms. There would be a lot of logistics to sort out but Surrey County Council was initially positive about it and grants of up to 15k were available to set it up, although, due to the current crisis SCC is no longer responding. The nursery has a number of advantages to an SEN provision as it could be set up and closed quickly including midway through the year so it could open in January for instance and an income could be generated as soon as it opened. This would also mean it wouldn't affect the PAN should birth rates increase again as there would be time to wind-down the nursery. AP explained that a viability report needed to be produced as it was important the nursery didn't cost the school money. The nursery would need to be marketed heavily but it could give a more market driven approach to the school applications.</p> <p>AP also explained that a nursery would be very likely to put Montessori / Wilderness Nurseries out of business. She has therefore had meetings with the owners to be open and honest. At this stage it looked possible the school could work with these nurseries and take on some of their highly trained nursery staff as our staff were not necessarily experts in this area.</p> <p>KP and TLW reminded governors that, during the closure, comments and questions about the budget can continue to be raised using the GVO.</p> <p>SH left at 16:30.</p> <p>SM reported to the FGB that the SFVS has been reviewed and submitted. This process needed to continue during the lockdown and GVO would be used to facilitate this. Governors will be alerted when the documents are available and are requested to check and comment/confirm they have been read.</p>
6.	<p>CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE UPDATE</p> <p>JS confirmed that all items from C&L would be carried forward due to the current situation with Covid19. However, she did draw Governor's attention to the fact that the Safeguarding Governor, Tim Bevans, would be meeting with the Head to look at the anti-bullying policy in more detail in particular recording bullying allegations that on investigation are not bullying.</p>
7.	<p>PAY COMMITTEE UPDATE (RMF and SR left the meeting)</p> <p>Governors approved the recommendations from the Pay Committee regarding the applications received for the upper pay scale.</p>
8.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>19.30 - Tuesday 7th July - Full Governing Body – venue to be confirmed.</p>