

Minutes from the Full Governing Body Meeting

Held on 12th May 2021

At 19:00 virtually via Zoom

Present	Kate Barlow (KB) – Parent Governor, Mike Cahill (MC) – Co-opted Governor, Peter Cosgrove (PG) – Co-opted Governor, Cat Hemmings (CH) – Co-opted Governor, Helen Ruff (HR) – Headteacher, Alexia (Lexie) Tuckwell (LT) – Staff Governor
Absent	Maria Ortin
Apologies	Eve Coles – Associate Member Theresa Morenes – Associate Member
In attendance	Hattie Clay (HC) – OCC Clerk

The meeting started at 19:00 and was quorate

No	Item	Action
1	Declarations of interest None declared for this meeting	
2	Notification of Urgent Business There was no urgent business raised	
3	Minutes from the last meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was an incomplete action for KB to circulate training notes. <p><i>All other actions were complete.</i></p> <p>With the above agreed change, the minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record of discussions and will be signed to that affect when possible.</p>	
4	Headteacher's update including COVID <p>HR confirmed that there have been no further cases since November 2020. HR explained that this case in November did not lead to any further requirement for isolation. HR explained that the risk assessment has remained broadly the same. HR has been attending weekly headteacher briefings from Oxfordshire County Council and noted that the highest number of cases amongst staff were amongst nursery staff. HR explained that the children are spending a lot of time outdoors at the moment and staff added that the risk assessment for outdoor learning is being continuously assessed, especially due to the adverse weather conditions. Governors heard that the school are intending to return the provision to normal from September.</p> <p>Attendance – Governors heard that the attendance data has risen and all vulnerable children have returned. HR explained that there is one family who have not returned but noted that there is a range of external factors included in this decision. HR explained that staff can see a notable difference in the children who were at home during the lockdowns and noted that some of the more vulnerable learners are not where they would be expected to be at this point.</p>	

	<p>HR explained that there are 86 nursery school places filled, adding that there is a high number of SEND children. HR explained that it has been challenging for staff to get used to high numbers of children in nursery again, as lots require a significant amount of support.</p> <p>Governors noted that it was good to see nursery school busy again and noted that the provision on offer is positive.</p> <p>HR explained that in the last term she received phone calls from three families with children who are starting in September who have removed their children from previous settings as they were not able to settle. HR explained that this confirms that so nursery staff are doing so well at this.</p> <p>HR commented that the biggest impact has been on language development and also maths attainment and therefore the main focus will be on communication and spoken language.</p> <p><i>How are we looking for September – is there anything we need to be doing to support the school?</i></p> <p>HR responded that marketing always needed and commented that there are 38 children who will be leaving for primary school in September.</p> <p><i>Which Cycle are we on?</i></p> <p>HR responded that this is the “better” autumn term, and explained that numbers go down every other year, so this is the better year of the two year cycle.</p> <p>Governors suggested a putting up a new banner in July, throughout the summer holidays. Governors were asked to think about any other suggestions for marketing.</p>	ALL
5	<p>Finance</p> <p>HR explained that the budget has been submitted to OCC and commented that OCC are aware that there will be a number of changes which may impact the budget.</p> <p>HR highlighted that given the budget and staffing expenses, the deficit is likely to increase each year. It was noted that this situation needs to be resolved in order to improve the financial position of the school</p>	
6	<p>Health and Safety</p> <p>Governors heard that the Annual health and safety visit was conducted and a number of items came up which were immediate or short term actions, mainly down to risk assessments.</p> <p>HR commented that the school have received a large quotation for the tree survey from a company called Stockwell DQ has agreed to do the work for over £2K less than the original quotation.</p> <p>Play equipment survey – Governors heard that a couple of minor issues have been identified but these are all noted to be in hand. Governors thanked Leigh for all of his work on Health and Safety.</p>	

	Governors commented that at the strategy meeting, it was asked if Leigh could be let off some of his reporting duties and the response was that this was being considered. DQ will follow up this decision with Sarah Fogden or Andy Flowers at OCC.	DQ
7	Staffing Governors heard that 5 staffing scenarios have been drafted. HR explained that due to the integration project and possible changes occurring as the year the school felt that it would be best to opt for a model with as little change as possible at the moment.	
8	EYFS curriculum change <p>HR explained that there is a revised version of the EYFS curriculum which will come into force from 1st September. HR explained that some schools are working with this already as early adopters. HR commented that this is a significant change to the framework with re-stated priorities for early years practitioners. HR explained that this allows staff more freedom to decide on the curriculum content, and aims to reduce the amount of paperwork produced. Governors heard that the focus is on ensuring that schools provide the “the best for every child”, with high quality care and a broader brush on the description, tailored to children with good depth of learning. HR explained that there is a section on pedagogy and the nursery feel confident in this as they have done a lot of work on this. HR explained that this document also focuses on helping children with self-regulation and executive function, and resilience as well as a focus on partnership with parents.</p> <p>HR commented that the early learning goals and development matters goals are less detailed, and more reliant on practitioners having experience in child development. HR noted that the school are confident that staff have a good grasp of early child development and pedagogy used to support children’s learning. HR explained that this document focuses on less tracking, with a larger focus on identifying and addressing gaps in children’s development. HR explained that the team feel re-assured, as lots of this is already happening in the school. HR explained that work on collating the pedagogy and mapping this has started and the school are now working on emotion coaching. Governors heard that wellbeing, maths mastery, dialogic reading and poetry baskets are the basic pedagogy’s which map onto this curriculum.</p> <p>Dialogue and talking will be a focus for the school and Governors heard that younger children are not getting the vocabulary they need and the setting are responding to this need. HR explained that the setting are confident that in area there is already a strong piece of practice.</p> <p>Poetry basket – LT explained that this is one of the areas used to help develop confidence and speak and say words together. Governors heard that there is daily use of the poetry basket with actions said 3 times to allow children the opportunity to participate even if their language is less developed.</p> <p>Governors heard that there has been two staff meetings on emotion coaching – one went through framework and another where staff brought challenges back and discussed as a team. HR commented that the quality of discussion was great and the team showed that they have a broad breadth and depth of knowledge in the area.</p>	

	<p><i>Do you have plans in place to ensure that setting remain on track with everything going on?</i></p> <p>HR explained that she, Lynne and LT are talking tomorrow about how to connect pedagogy, curriculum and the CPD of the team. HR explained that the team will also be talking about how they can connect the many roles together and can delegate roles moving forward. HR added that this EYFS document looks at any unnecessary documentation and staff are looking to move away from the amount of documentation, streamlining where possible and ensuring that this is lean, whilst still showing the learning journey without so much of a focus on detailed observation recording. This will allow practitioners to plan better.</p>	
9	<p>Governor monitoring and visits</p> <p>It was noted that there remain some gaps in the visit reports. The chair commented that these gaps need to be filled in a timely fashion.</p> <p>Discussion was had around the areas which are currently without a link Governor or which have been overlooked over the last year. The following areas were highlighted as priority areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SEND (including other vulnerable learners such as PP) 2. Curriculum 3. HR <p>Governors noted that MC has a link role of SEND and PP. CH explained that she could help with this by the end of June if MC is not able to pick this up. HR will reach out to Mike to find out about this.</p> <p>HR suggested that Governors were invited to the next staff training session to discuss pedagogy. LT commented that it is likely that staff will be discussing dialogic reading at this meeting and Governors commented that this would cover the curriculum monitoring visit. HR to let governors know the date of this.</p> <p>Governors commented that Wellbeing is another area which needs to be addressed and it was decided that the notes from the staff meeting were available and so these will be discussed with HR and KB, to monitor this element.</p> <p>HR noted that the school have not had a school improvement partner for some time. HR explained that this role was previously funded by OCC and noted that this funding has now been restored. HR explained that she met with the new school improvement partner (Catherine Haywood) before the Easter. HR explained that the focus of conversation for this visit was about establishing updates about the ACE centre. KB will pass on this information to Governors.</p>	<p>HR</p> <p>HR</p> <p>HR/KB</p> <p>KB</p>
10	<p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <p>The election results were discussed and it was noted that it would be beneficial for Robert Courts to be more engaged with the ACE centre. Governors commented that it would be good to engage with the County Counsellor, as he has an interest in education. Governors discussed that the centre has had a lot of support locally and it would be good for Counsellors to understand the challenges faced by the centre. Governors discussed that one of the biggest voices advocating for nursery has been Liz Brighouse, who has raised strong arguments in support of nursery schools. Governors suggested that it would be</p>	

	<p>beneficial therefore to try and get some collaboration between the local Counsellor and Liz Brighthouse on the matter of nursery schools across the county. It was noted that this would be an opportunity to put something in the Chipping Norton News. Governors discussed the benefits of having him in the centre with the children, but noted that this may not be possible at the moment. Governors therefore felt that it would be more beneficial to look at arranging this after June 21st when social distancing measures may no longer be applicable.</p> <p>Governors commented that it would be nice for parents on local Facebook groups to raise awareness of the centre. Staff noted that the Friends of the ACE group would be a good starting point to take this forward, and would be a good way to do some of this social media marketing.</p> <p>Can Governors offer any help with this? HR responded that she will discuss with staff and let Governors know. HR explained that part of the Hemsalls workshop for maintained nursery schools includes a section on marketing and noted that the use of social media is discussed as part of this.</p> <p>Could we facilitate a drop in session in Café Nero – and ask Café Nero for support in this, setting aside some hours in September for Governors to be available? Governors commented that this is a good initiative and commented that this may be possible from September. CH will make initial contact with Café Nero about this.</p> <p>Is there still a book fayre locally? It was noted that this has been cancelled for the last couple of years but noted that this may revive in March next year.</p> <p>Do we get involved in Arts week? LT responded that in previous years, the school has set up a display and held a clay workshop which was very good. LT will look into getting in touch with Chipping Norton arts centre to arrange this again.</p>	<p>HR</p> <p>CH</p> <p>LT</p>
11	<p>Governor training Generalist Safeguarding training – Governors hears that all staff renewed this training at the beginning of April. It was noted that this now needs to be renewed for all Governors. HR suggested that this is done virtually and noted that it should take no more than two hours. HR and LT will circulate dates and times which work in the next 2-3 weeks. It was noted that this would be in the evening – 6:30 start with an alternative start suggested as well.</p> <p>HR has attended Governor monitoring training.</p>	<p>HR/LT</p>
12	<p>Policies It was noted that there were no policies to review. HR will bring some policies to the next meeting, to avoid a large quantify in September. Governors heard that the behaviour policy has been re-named Understanding and Supporting Behaviour Policy”.</p> <p>HR explained that the school do not have an anti-bullying policy as the behaviour policy includes age appropriate anti-bullying information. HR explained that the school focus more on helping children to understand their behaviour.</p>	

12	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Governors heard that there have been some serious issues raised recently and HR added that the team have been managing these very well. HR explained that staff knew and complied with Policies and understood which actions were appropriate to take. HR explained that an external audit confirmed that the actions taken were sound. Governors heard that this has created a huge amount of work for LT, which has meant that HR has been pulled away supporting LT. HR confirmed that the team acted in an exemplary way and followed procedures correctly, which led to an excellent outcome.</p>	
13	<p>AOB</p> <p>None</p>	

The meeting ended at 20:50