



Directors' Note for Portfolio Groups

Portfolio title: Pilton Infants' LGB

Date of meeting: Tuesday 5th March 2024, 5.30pm

Attended by: John Mortimer (head of school), Brian Holme, Jessica Haynes-Holme, Lindsay Tranter-Sharpe, Kate Nolan, Lisa Marinaro (potential local governor), Kate Curnow (potential local governor, from 5.47pm), Verity Goss (clerk, virtual).

Brief overview of discussion

Procedural items

Welcome and apologies – potential new local governors.

KN welcomed all to the meeting. LM introduced herself – she had a child at the school and had previously worked at Pilton Infants' – now taught at another infants school.

Declaration of business interests

Non declared.

Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. KN explained the difference between the LGB and previous full governing board before acadimsation.

Matters arising

None not elsewhere on the agenda.

Correspondence

None received.

FGB minutes had had a separate actions list – governors had found this useful. Governors felt it would be useful to have actions more easily identified on the minutes.

Reports

Head of School report including:

- Curriculum update
- Attendance
- Attainment/progress data
- Pupil numbers, pre-school numbers
- School Improvement Plan and Priorities
- Safeguarding
- School Improvement Plan

Attendance – JM stated that this was a bit lower than he would like, as the school had had a bad run of some illnesses – chicken pox, scarlet fever, strep, and stomach bugs. This had also affected staff attendance. JM stated that having time to action attendance was sometimes difficult as other things came up. *Daytime cleaner had left and not been replaced – this role had been brought in due to Covid, had the lack of daytime cleaner led to increased spreading of bugs?* JM explained the cleaner had only just left – there had been lots of bugs in January, even when they were in post. This would be monitored. The school currently felt the staff cost could have more impact if used for TA support. Teachers tended to disinfect surfaces at lunchtime if there was illness in their class.

SEND numbers – these had gone up since the last meeting as some Reception children had been added. JM stated that this was a key area for the trust development. JM did not think that these numbers would decrease – there were children in the school that would have likely gone to a specialist school a few years ago, but there were very limited places at specialist settings. The children were doing well in the school. 22 on SEND register, 5 EHCP. 5 more applications for EHCPs were being submitted. JM explained the type of need children had had changed over time – there was now more social/emotional support needed.

KC arrived 5.47pm. KC introduced herself and gave some background – had a child in the school and was part of a senior leadership team in her work role, so was used to strategic discussions and management.

Attendance – going forward JM was working with office staff on a good system for regular monitoring of attendance.

Exclusions – no permanent exclusions, but there had been some fixed term exclusions. JM explained the reasons for the exclusions. Behaviour was a challenge in the school – this had been found to be the case in many schools coming out of Covid. Suspension was seen as a last resort option – it was good to see this had been effective in Y2, as the children concerned had not had another suspension. Outside support was being put in place and the school was working with the inclusion team for the YR/Y1 children. JM shared the action plan that had been put together on this. It was extreme behavior the school had not previously experienced. The bigger behavior could then lead to more lower level disruption in the rest of the class. Suspensions were difficult but

sometimes needed – they could be a stepping stone for a child to receive more support.

Safeguarding – two children at child protection, ongoing. JM explained Public Law Outline – a step on from Child Protection. This was an indication of how families were struggling. SCR check had taken place and was fine.

JM shared an overview of staffing changes. An additional TA had been appointed in Y2 to give more support – this had made a good start. School SENDCO was leaving at Easter, but continuing for half a day over the summer term. JM explained the plans to cover the summer term, and the permanent plans from September, which would be very good for transition between Pilton Infants' and Bluecoat. There was also the possibility of a SENDCO assistant for more admin based tasks. TEAM was also looking to grow the pastoral team across the two schools. JM felt there would be a real benefit of having a SENDCO across both schools – they could really get to know the families, and ensure continuity for children across the settings. It had been a good opportunity to do things slightly differently. *How would the summer term work with Stacey coming in half a day a week, when previously things had been under pressure? Who would pick up the slack?* JM explained that this would depend on what the issue was – early help issues would be picked up by Hayley Bowles, Ebon would be given time to do the visits to nursery SENDCOs. Stacey would continue to manage EHCPs, new parent meetings and handovers. *Staff had raised concerns as they found Stacey's presence in school very helpful?* JM stated the school would look at getting someone in for the summer term, potentially in a pastoral capacity. *Could the SENDCO assistant be put in place sooner rather than later?* Potentially.

LGB members requested staff absence data be added back to the head of school report format.

Pupil Premium and Sports funding – JM gave an overview of where this money was used. Number of EAL children was increasing, which did affect attendance as more trips abroad were needed. Very good progress was being made by these children.

JM explained cold calling – no asking for children to raise hands to answer a question, all had to think of the answer and the teacher asked at random – children would sometimes 'opt out' out 'hands up' situations. This was part of looking at different ways to build engagement.

Behaviour and attitudes – JM had shared the action plan. Behaviour audit had started over the last couple of weeks. This was helping as a school to get ideas, and for Ian to get to know the children. *What was involved?* There had been a couple of mornings of observations, and staff also got feedback - discussion on what was going well, what were the challenges, and how to tackle them. A group of Y2 children had been talked to about their learning, and what would make a good place to learn. JM felt that having to use the hall for a year had had an impact on the children – they were used to a busy environment with more distractions. The school was working as much as possible to get support in place, and had found some pockets of funding to get people in. Nurture and Nature – a holistic view, working with children at their own settings/family/school – they built a picture of the child and put support in place. They were able to support children with a range of things. JM stated it was difficult as support in Devon was not great – it had taken three weeks

to talk to an inclusion officer. Staff governor reported staff were appreciative of what JM had done to improve things. Staff were aware it was a challenging period, and were sticking together to get through it. They were a good team – looked out for each other as much as they could. Opal project for playtimes was being introduced, and should also have an impact on the behavior.

Opal project – initial policy was being put in place. Some ‘quick wins’ were being looked at – eg bubble machine, some outside music. Currently all play equipment got put away at the end of lunchtime – some items could live out all the time, which would give more storage space. The school was also coming up with a plan for mud – welly racks and wellies. The PTA should be able to help with the funding for this as it would benefit all the children. Witheridge and Beaford had been using Opal for a longer time – children learnt to manage their own risk. As it progressed there were lower numbers of behavioural issues, and first aid incidents decreased. JM stated that one of the first things talked about at training was memories of childhood play – more imaginative than children currently did.

Suspended children – was there a monitoring process in place? Was parent support involved? JM explained how these cases were monitored, and that CPOMS was very useful for this.

Personal development – it had been good having a pastoral TA in the school three days a week this year – JM stated he wanted to increase this next year if possible. Parent drop in session – they were not used every time, but were very useful when parents did use them.

There had been lots of joint projects across TEAM – cross country event had not happened yet due to the weather.

Community links – there had been a good event in the church. Children had visited Portmore Court at Christmas – they were going to start visiting at a few other times. The residents appreciated it, and it was also good for the children to be able to talk to the residents. Link with Pathfields school – KS3/4 children were coming over weekly to read to Reception children. This was going well. Pilton Bluecoat also did some work with Pathfields.

Leadership and management – the vision had been launched – artwork created looked good. Aspects were covered throughout the term. There would be another assembly at the start of the summer term to relaunch it.

When would the school know how many children would be starting Reception in September? LTS stated that there were currently 57 first choice applications – from previous experience there would be some more applications before September. Currently 179 in the school – one space available. Local governors discussed the fluctuation of numbers given birth rates.

Data – Reception. JM explained each area. Currently 42% overall at good level of development – this was lower than staff would like, but quite a cautious

prediction. It was expected to go up. Staff were looking at which children were missing in one or two areas. There was some disparity between boys and girls, and also other groups – staff were working to close these gaps.

Year One – JM explained that this was again quite cautious data, and staff expected it to improve. JM explained the progress made – a large amount of children had made significant progress, showing the impact of the teaching staff. Monitoring progress also showed any need to focus on an area if progress was slipping. Reading data was quite consistent between boys and girls, showing the impact of the Little Wandle scheme. *If reading improved, did this affect writing?* JM confirmed that this should be the case, although there would be a lag behind.

Year Two – this was expected to improve, but not as much as the other years. This cohort had had lower data through the school. There was a focus on children who were slipping back from the expected standard. There had to be work on learning behaviours with this cohort. The school had opted out of KS1 SATs – the first year they had been made options. Teachers would still do assessments with the children – TEAM used curriculum maestro, which had assessments available to use to monitor attainment and progress.

Response to misbehavior and action plan – JM explained that the response to misbehavior had been simplified, and responses to serious misbehavior added in to make it clearer to staff.

Had the staff survey been completed? Not yet. Local governors wanted to have feedback from staff on how behavior issues were affecting them. Staff governor stated that it was difficult, but staff were very supportive of each other, proactive, and wanted to make things better for the children. Employee assistance program – JM would remind staff it was available. KN stated staff found it useful to have somewhere external available to turn to if needed.

BH and KN had met with the school council – it had been useful to hear from children. JM stated it was also useful for the children, giving them a good experience of being confident to talk to adults.

School improvement plan – within head's report. To be sent to LM and KC. *When would next year's plan be written?* SEF would be completed in the summer, then the SDP would be updated at the end of the summer/beginning of autumn. Local governor felt RAG rating on previous version was useful. JM stated this would still be possible.

Monitoring and Accountability

Governor Visits

BH and KN had done a joint visit – they had met with JM, talked about the school, spent time observing playtime and did a pupil voice activity. There had been a focus on vision and behavior. There were more behavioural challenges now, but this was due to the cohort of children, not due to the new behavior

policy. They had also met with staff at lunchtime – this was difficult as staff had not yet been made aware of the plans to replace Stacey, and staff had voiced concerns about this. It had been a good conversation, and they had reiterated to staff that governors are there if staff want to talk to them/want a second opinion.

Strategic

Governor Training / Bluesky

VG would circulate summer term training opportunities when available.

Academy Items

Health and Safety Update

Report circulated – inclusion of costs was useful. JM explained how the premises team had time scales for different items – mostly to be completed by summer. No major issues needing emergency action. There were still some issues with the new build – fire door replaced as originally installed the wrong way round. Also looking to replace the main doors as these were heavy for children to open. They had eased a bit which had helped. *Was the building still in the snagging period?* JM confirmed that it was, and the issues were being rectified.

Fire alarm – would be more of an issue to have sorted.

JM explained that this was another benefit of being in TEAM, as the premises team were able to work on items as needed. There was a shared spreadsheet where staff were able to add items they noticed needed doing. It was reassuring that there were no major issues.

Lockdown drill had taken place – this had been useful.

Not included on sheet – new phone system was being installed, with a phone in each classroom. As the school and staffing had grown it had outgrown the walkie talkies currently in use. Walkie talkies would still be used for ‘roaming’ staff members.

School was now connected to Pilton Bluecoat internet – was this going okay? There had been an issue at the start, but this was now working fine.

MAT Update

There had been a good outcome from Pilton Bluecoat’s Ofsted inspection.

New website was looking good.

Sign outside school – JM explained some other schools were also seeking updated signage, premises team were working to get consistent.

Front gate – local governor had noticed these didn't meet properly – did they lock? JM stated they didn't. Did this need to be addressed? JM had talked with premises team – potentially looking to move the gates. Did the school have cycle racks? Cycle racks were available for children's bikes. There were some staff that cycled in.

Matters brought forward by the Chair

Next trustees meeting – three weeks. VG explained TEAM's previous governance structure of a trustee member on each LGB, and the move to the preferred model of separation of different levels of governance.

TEAM was currently in an embedded period with the two schools that had recently moved.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 9th July, 5.30pm. Date of summer governor visit/focus to be arranged.

Actions from Meeting

- VG – add separate actions list
- JM – add staff absence to head of school report
- JM – remind staff of employee assistance program
- VG/JM – LM and KC to receive SDP
- VG – circulate summer training dates
- JM – summer term visit date/focus