

## Directors' Note for Portfolio Groups

Portfolio title: Brayford/Umberleigh LGB

Date of meeting: Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021, 12.30pm, Umberleigh Village Hall

Attended by: Penny Wignall, Melanie Marcolini (from 12.40pm), Helen Cooke, Corrine Smith, Jenny Geen, Katie Locke, Verity Goss (clerk).



### Brief overview of discussion

#### **Procedural items**

##### Welcome and apologies

PW welcomed all to the meeting. KL confirmed as a local governor. Rachel Weeks had not attended a meeting since November 2020, and had not sent apologies for subsequent meetings. The guidance for circumstances such as this was for the governor to be removed from the board due to non attendance – local governors agreed this would be the best course of action.

##### Declaration of business interests

None declared.

##### Sign off previous minutes

Minutes agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

##### Matters arising brought forward by Chair

None.

##### Correspondence

None.

MM arrived 12.40pm.

#### **Monitoring and Accountability**

##### Autumn 2 update:

##### Covid update

In the past few weeks, governors had had viewings of both Brayford and Umberleigh schools, and PW had attended the Standards and Scrutiny committee day.

CS reported that there had been a number of Covid cases at Brayford – following advice from the DfE/Public Health England classes were again in bubbles, staff were wearing masks and cleaning and ventilation continued. Letters had been sent home to parents advising them to look out for symptoms in their children. CS stated that PHE had been impressed with the measures the school had taken. Staff were doing all they could to safeguard children and staff. There was some increased anxiety in both staff and children – CS explained how staff worked to reassure children.

CO2 monitors were in place – CS reported it was interesting to see how the concentration changed throughout the day. MM recommended the use of social stories – MM had seen some specific to Covid.

### Curriculum

On the local governors' visit to Umberleigh IT had gone through a lot of questions/talked about the role of a local governor.

CS stated that staff continued to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, despite the current challenges. Schools were continuing with the 'big events' to enhance the curriculum. CS gave some examples of planned trips. Children were responding really well, and were engaged in the activities. Children had attended the TEAM cross country event. It had been a good experience for the children to be part of a bigger group of children their own age. Some had found it a challenge, but it was a good example to talk to children about transferable skills such as perseverance.

How do trips fit in with the curriculum? CS explained that the next trips planned were linked to the history aspects of the current topic, but a lot of the English planning also linked to the topics. This helped to embed the knowledge children were learning about.

### Monitoring standards

#### School specific SIP Updates:

- SIP and Progress at Umberleigh
- SIP and Progress at Brayford
- KS1 / KS2 Covid 19 catch up needs

Local governors had received the two page summary SEF, and summary of improvement priorities. CS stated that a lot of the good aspects/areas for improvement were the same at both schools.

Key aspects from the last Brayford Ofsted report – focus on greater progress in writing, and ensuring the more able in maths received challenging work. CS explained 'the rectangle thingy', which was used to help children planning a piece of writing – writing became more effective, and developed better lifelong skills in their writing.

CS explained the comparative judgement tool for Y6 writing, where children's writing was compared against others of the same age. A local governor raised a possible flaw where there may be a bias due to presentation. CS explained that the algorithm was designed to cancel out this bias. Work was being compared across all the schools in the trust. There would also be a comparison done for Y2 work.

CS explained how children were helped to develop instant recall of facts – children needed to understand the concept of what they were recalling. Children also learnt tips on how to work out problems. All children were different in how they learnt, and were shown a range of ways to think about tasks.

A key action for Umberleigh was for middle ability children in maths. CS explained the mastery approach to maths – not limiting children by a grouping. The same material was available to all children – there was not a barrier that a certain group could not do the higher level work. CS explained how the KS2 class was spilt for maths teaching. Did children enjoy maths more with this approach than they used to? CS felt the majority of children would say that they enjoyed maths.

PW gave a report on the Standards and Scrutiny day at Pilton that she had attended. The day had started with a review of each school, and then of the history, literacy and art curriculums. Trustees had then had a walk round the school, where they were able to see how the new visualisers worked. CS stated that they were a good tool in the classroom. There had then been a book scrutiny in the afternoon, for history and literacy. Y6 and Y3 children from Pilton had come in to talk to trustees, and had echoed what staff had been saying in the morning.

PW stated the timelines around the classroom were in use in all the schools, and intended to provide a context to what children were learning about in history. Y6 children had talked about what they had learnt about history in previous years, and how it fitted in to the timeline. Y3 children were not sure – but had just come from a different school, where it would have been approached in a different way. CS stated that it had been harder to include history when teaching virtually, but staff had included it as well as they could.

The report from Neil Swaite had highlighted how children should recognise history and geography as subjects, rather than ‘topic’. CS stated that it was harder in primary school to differentiate all the time, as there was a lot of overlap. A local governor asked how much emphasis there was on work in books – CS stated that it depended on the age and subject, with infants having a big class book where children’s learning was recorded – a lot of discussion rather than written work. The big book was also useful to remind children what had been covered previously.

Key priorities – reading and phonics, maths, sequence of revision of history and geography topics. CS explained that some of the catch up spending was used on the new PHSE resources from Jigsaw, which was ensuring that PHSE was planned and taught in a more robust way. A new scheme of work was being used to help with planning of computing – there was an ICT curriculum lead in TEAM. CS explained that subject leads across the whole trust was improving the leadership of staff, which was especially useful for the small schools.

There was a new curriculum in place for EYFS. Baseline assessments had taken place.

CS stated that the report of catch up spending had been published on each website. At Umberleigh, the fund had been used to employ a TA to support struggling readers, and also used to purchase books to enhance the library, as well as phonics books to support early reading. Further spending planned was touch screen devices for early years, and a light box for drawing. The tutoring grant had not yet been spent – this money was to support disadvantaged children.

At Brayford, catch up money had been used for Early Years equipment, books and PHSE resources. With the remainder CS wanted to employ a teacher for 3

mornings a week for 12 weeks to split the class, which would make a significant impact. This would only be successful if the school was able to recruit a suitable member of staff.

SEND/PP – CS stated that there was very limited Educational Psychologist availability in Devon. These were needed for SEN assessments – reports were needed to move forward with referrals. Had this been an issue for Brayford and Umberleigh? CS stated that the assessments needed in Umberleigh had taken place, but after a long wait – support had already been put in place for these children. No children were currently waiting for an assessment in Brayford and Umberleigh, but they were in other schools across the trust.

#### Reports from governor visits

Local governors had visited both Brayford and Umberleigh schools. Local governors reported that it had been good to be able to be in the schools again. Parents had previously come in with children in the mornings – discussion of benefits and disadvantages of this. Children were learning more independence going in to school on their own. A balance would be needed – it could be possible to have one morning a week where parents were welcomed in to the classroom, but it would need to be carefully done to not put guilt on working parents who couldn't stay.

At the next visit the aim would be to look at books and pupil voice. CS stated that children talked to visitors very happily.

#### Governors responsibilities and training needs

All had received a copy of Ian Thomas's action plan – all agreed they were clear on their role as a local governor.

Training needed – new governors needed safeguarding training. PW described how Bluesky was used to record CPD, and highlighted what courses were available.

#### Review school website

Statutory requirements were checked by Michelle Sampson. A new website was being developed, which could hopefully be linked to the school facebook page.

#### Safeguarding Report

Visit from Safeguarding trustee due on 9<sup>th</sup> December.

#### Covid 19 current challenges

CS reported that staff absence was the biggest challenge, as supply was difficult to find at the moment. A local governor asked if TAs could take the class – CS stated that some could, but it was not ideal. It was made more difficult when the school could not mix class bubbles.

#### Health and safety report

Report had been received – no major issues. There were a few minor issues that had been raised. New projectors were being sourced for the Umberleigh infants classroom and Brayford juniors classroom. There was another premises visit planned for this half term – MM would join the Umberleigh inspection

if possible.

A local governor raised the disruption to classes if children were coming in late at Umberleigh due to current classroom set up – possible solutions were discussed.

### **Strategic**

#### Umberleigh Park and Play

The company installing the equipment had not been able to proceed as the ground had been too wet – the trust business manager was trying to find out where they would have been staying to see if the booking could be moved to another date. The delay was frustrating, but it was worth ensuring the project was completed properly.

The dividers had been removed in the car park, which was working well. CS wanted to ensure children were clear that they needed to stop at the gate – children were involved in making signs for this.

#### Review pupil numbers, projected numbers, staffing

Currently 37 on roll at Brayford, with 5 Brumblebees – another Brumblebee was due to start in April. A new MTA had started. A full time advert had gone out for the position of cook – Bev was able to continue for the moment until a replacement was found. Recruitment was difficult across all schools currently. An additional TA for the junior class had been approved by trustees for three children who needed additional support. The request for an additional teacher would be discussed by trustees at the next meeting.

There were currently 50 children on roll at Umberleigh, with a new child due to start in January. Currently 20 Brumblebees registered – the new building was due to go in on 10<sup>th</sup> January – after this children would be able to be offered more hours. Capacity for more staff was there if needed. Currently the school was recruiting for an MTA for Brumblebees and infants. The PAN and PNAN had been increased for Umberleigh – if numbers increased the case could be put forward that a bigger space was needed.

#### Attendance including PP data

Umberleigh – whole school attendance 97.3%, PP 96.5% - overall good.

Brayford – whole school attendance 91.3%, PP 85.6%. Brayford had been more affected with Covid, and parents were more cautious about keeping children at home when they had a cold.

#### Update on Academy Trust

Staffing – infants teacher from Brayford currently on maternity leave would be seconded to Beaford when she returned from maternity leave, until the end of the summer term. The teacher was excited about this opportunity. The maternity cover would continue in their role, which was good for continuity. CS stated that opportunities such as this for teachers in the MAT was very beneficial.

High Bickington and Witheridge had both had Ofsted inspections this term, which had had good outcome – TEAM had been commended in both reports.

Meeting ended 2.55pm

Date of Next Meeting – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1.00pm, to be held at Brayford.