

Directors' Note for Portfolio Groups

Portfolio title: Brayford/Umberleigh LGB

Date of meeting: 13th May 2021, 1.30pm, held virtually.

Attended by: Penny Wignall, Sue Davies (until 2.39pm), Helen Cooke, Charlotte Janisch (until 3.09pm), Corrine Smith, Verity Goss (clerk).



Brief overview of discussion

Procedural items

Welcome and apologies

PW welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies received from Melanie Marcolini.

Sign off previous minutes

Minutes agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising brought forward by Chair

None not elsewhere in agenda.

Correspondence

None received.

Monitoring and Accountability

Summer curriculum Update KS1/KS2

CS informed local governors that the junior classes in both school were looking at the Tudors, in a topic named 'off with her head'. Literacy work was linked to this topic. In art, children were looking at portraits which also linked to the topic. The schools were also starting the PHSE curriculum in a more formalised way. Originally 'off with her head' had been planned as a topic for the spring term, but had been moved to the summer term as staff felt they could not make the most of it during virtual learning.

The infants classes were doing the topic 'Bright Lights, Big City', and were looking at London, and also the Royal Family. The book they were reading in class to link with this was 'Paddington at the Palace'. This topic also had links to the KS2 topic.

Brumblebees were looking at buildings – making buildings, learning stories like ‘The Three Little Pigs’, doing junk modelling, looking at shelters. The topics being looked at by all three age groups had some links to those studied by the others.

The infant class at Umberleigh had been on a trip to Rosemoor Gardens, where they had been learning about animals and their habitats. Trips were being planned for the other classes linked to their topics – staff were considering which places would be good to visit to link in with and enhance the topics.

The Y6 residential at Ultimate Adventure Centre was able to go ahead – all Y6 children from Umberleigh were going, and all but one of the Y6 children at Brayford. Staff had organised an opportunity for the two groups to meet the week before – as there was only one girl in the Umberleigh group, and one boy in the Brayford group it would be good for them to meet the other children they would be sharing rooms with beforehand.

Sports Days had been provisionally booked in for both schools. A group of children from Brayford were training for the Exmoor Challenge, which was being run slightly differently this year. Cross school sports competitions were being discussed – unfortunately the government guidance for schools had not yet been updated in line with the national roadmap out of lockdown, so it was not yet known if this would be able to happen.

After schools sports clubs had been restarted – the different classes were kept separate to maintain the bubbles. The running club was aiming for a race for life event at the end of term.

Monitoring standards

School specific SIP Updates

- SIP and Progress at Umberleigh
- SIP and Progress at Brayford
- Catch up need assessment

CS stated that staff were collecting evidence of the work that the children were doing. Staff were currently planning the Values Day, and the work that would be done around values.

There had been a lot of work done on the four year rolling programme, to ensure that everything was covered over the time a child was in school. CS gave examples of some areas of certain subject that were year specific – eg in science evolution was in the Y6 curriculum, but if it was only on the four year programme once, then a child who had it in Y3 would not have an understanding of it in the same depth as a child who learnt about it in Y6. CS explained how revisiting areas had the advantage of embedding knowledge, and how the program had been designed to ensure all children had covered all the areas in depth.

How did teachers cope with having different year groups in the same class, when they were meant to cover different areas? CS explained that teaching a four year class was something the teacher got used to, and adapted the practise. The PHSE curriculum was taught separately in the relevant groups.

CS stated that there had been some issues with curriculum maestro, although there were many good aspects.

Local governors recognised that the schools were fortunate to have teachers who were skilled and able to teach the wide mixed age classes.

CS stated that she was pleased that despite the difficult year, staff had also been able to focus on the bigger picture of the improvement plan. There had been discussions about bringing in 'Talk like an Expert', which will start to be introduced to the classes. This was where a topic was reintroduced in the next term, with children talking about what they knew – this embedded what had been learnt about the topic. This helped with the child's knowledge on a topic, but it was hoped this would also help children to improve their speaking and articulating skills.

PHSE curriculum – currently the schools were using the PHSE Association materials, which were good. CS explained that PHSE was always evolving and updating, and was different for each group of children a teacher would have. Ideally CS would like to use Jigsaw for PHSE, but the cost was a barrier for a small school. Previous CEO had tried to get a discount without success – CS was trying again. CS explained that the PHSE Association resources were time intensive, but Jigsaw was better for teacher workload.

Behaviour policy – this had been being looked at as a trust. Some areas staff wanted to change – for example the reintroduction of the give me five poster for behaviour in the classroom. Staff had also been looking at the homework policy – CS felt that home learning policy might sound better. It would also be important to ensure that year groups were thought about differently.

Reading curriculum – CS explained staff had been looking at this to ensure continuity between the classes, and different age stages – Read

Write Inc/Free Reader/Accelerated Reader. Staff had also had training on whole class reading. Was CS happy with how reading currently looked in the schools? CS confirmed she was, and how reading had been implemented in the classes. Reading skill development was a benefit of whole class reading. What meant by teaching reading skills? CS explained that before reading a text as a whole class, they would talk about what they thought was going to happen, read it together, talk about words children didn't understand, which skills could be used to decide what the words could mean from the context. Also inference skills – what is a character like, how do you know, what has the author done to present the character like that? What is going to happen next?

Catch up need – at the last meeting CS had stated this was going well, is this still the case? CS stated the need was different in each class – the biggest need was in the KS2 class at UMBERLEIGH to make sure the Y6 children were ready for secondary school. Children had missed a big part of school this year, and hadn't had the same lead up to the end of their primary education.

Infants class at UMBERLEIGH – the Y1 group where there had previously been concerns had caught up, they did slip back during the second lockdown but were catching up again. CS stated that this cohort was very focussed on their learning. BRAYFORD – the children who were already behind were still behind. Was this a lot to do with attendance? CS confirmed this was the case, but staff were working with parents to ensure that attendance improved, and working in small groups to help catch up. Children's progress over lockdown was also affected by the amount of input children had at home. Generally, there was not an overall catch up need.

CS gave credit to all the parents for keeping going while the schools were closed. Children had come back to school ready to learn. They had not necessarily been doing the work set by school, but were able to do things they would not otherwise have been able to do.

Safeguarding Report

SD stated she had met with CS at the end of the last term.

There had been and were continuing safeguarding issues across the trust – small groups of children in each school, some with complex needs, which had come to the fore over lockdown. Heads of School were having to work extremely hard with families who were in crisis for various reasons. SD explained the work that heads of schools had to do – they had done an extremely good job in challenging circumstances.

No MASH referrals had been made – there were some families of concern. Attendance had been an issue in some cases – requests had been made for early help, and the EWO had been involved where necessary. Staff were doing all they could to enhance attendance.

One child who was on the child protection register had been lowered to child in need.

Brayford - number of children who were Pupil Premium had increased to seven – where attendance was good these children were doing really well. No fixed term or permanent exclusions.

Umberleigh – three EHCPs were at evidence collection stage and were moving forward. There were a significant number of children with EHCPs in the KS2 class. Reviews were undertaken regularly to ensure the needs were being met in the mainstream setting. It was difficult for parents on this journey where a mainstream school may not be the best setting for their child. There were seven Pupil Premium children at Umberleigh, and no fixed term or permanent exclusions.

The SCR in both schools were being maintained by the administrators, and were able to be accessed remotely by the trust business manager. Level Two Safeguarding refresher had taken place at the beginning of the summer term. Trust business manager and clerk co-ordinated on when governor safeguarding training was due.

Covid 19 current challenges

CS stated that working with the restrictions of bubbles was hard. Staff were hoping that they would be able to mix the two classes again after half term – it was felt that children were missing out by not being able to interact with the different age groups. Older children learnt many skills from playing and working with the younger children. Community feeling in the school was not as strong at the moment. Would parents be happy for the classes to mix? CS stated that the feeling they had was that parents would be ready for this.

Health and safety report/premises governor

Trust business manager and premises manager were still carrying out the Health and Safety inspections – at the last inspection this had been premises manager and CS due to the Covid restrictions. There were no major issues in the school. Change of gate system at Umberleigh was being discussed to seem less daunting, while still being secure. It was hoped the gate could be moved down the path a bit – this would need an intercom or buzzer system to admit visitors.

Premises governor to be discussed when restrictions eased.

Approve Policy – Outdoor Education

All had received. CS explained how the risk assessment procedure worked. All agreed.

Strategic

Umberleigh Park and Play equipment update

Play area part of field had wet ground currently – gully to be created in the far area/create a wetland area. Plans to improve the ground were explained. The improved surface was needed before the equipment could be installed. CJ and PW had a meeting with a play equipment provider – costing and proposals would be ready for next week. CJ was working on the Friends being re-registered as a charity, as more funding could be applied for. Hopefully this would be in place for September.

SD lost link to meeting 2.39pm.

Review pupil numbers, projected numbers, staffing

Brayford – 35 on roll. Six Y6 children were leaving, with six or seven starting in Reception, keeping the numbers consistent. Currently 10 children in Brumblebees – this would drop to three in September as there were a lot of children moving on to Reception. Leaflet dropping in the local area was to happen again, highlighting that 2YO places were available.

PW explained that a TEAM marketing campaign was being started, which had been discussed at the last trustees meeting.

CS reported that the EYFS maternity cover was very good. Rayna would be going on maternity leave in the autumn term – maternity cover would be in place from September, with Rayna working with intervention groups until she went on maternity leave. The advert had been placed, and one application had been received so far.

Umberleigh - numbers had increased recently as a number of families had moved to the area. Five Y6 children were leaving, with 11 starting Reception. Currently 48, would be 55 in September. This would be 29 in the infants and 26 in the juniors. CS stated there was a lot of thought going in to how to work with this in September – although not over the legal limits for classes, it was a large group when a mixed age class. It had been suggested to have an apprentice teacher for the Reception group, as part of the ITT scheme. The amount of teaching time built up over the year, and the apprentice teacher would have support. Local governors agreed this sounded like a good idea.

Was 26 in the juniors class too many given the number of children with SEN? CS agreed that it would be a challenge. At Brayford when there had been a similar class size it had been spilt into Y3/4 and Y5/6, but Brayford had another room that could be used as a classroom, which Umberleigh didn't. Umberleigh also did not have an even split of year groups – only two Y6. CS thought it would be fine with the support of two TAs. CS was also going to request an additional afternoon of time out of the classroom to support Brayford given the changes they would have next year.

Bumblebees at Umberleigh were doing well – 17-19 were expected in September. New building had been approved, and would be installed in the October half term.

Bumblebees update, numbers, staffing, accommodation

Discussed earlier in the meeting.

Attendance including PP data

Brayford – overall 97.96%. Pupil premium children – various reasons for low attendance in three children.

Umerleigh – overall 96.18%. Pupil premium 96.8% - very good.

CJ left at 3.09pm.

Update on Academy Trust

Pilton Infants governors had voted to start a management partnership with TEAM – this is what Brayford and Umberleigh had done prior to joining the MAT. This would give a better depth in the trust in the younger age groups.

Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 1st July, 1.30pm, Brayford.