

Directors' Note for Portfolio Groups

Portfolio title: Brayford/Umberleigh LGB

Date of meeting: 18th March 2021, 1.30pm, held virtually.

Attended by: Corrine Smith, Penny Wignall, Sue Davies, Helen Cooke (from 1.50pm), Charlotte Janisch (from 1.55pm), Verity Goss (clerk).



Brief overview of discussion

Procedural items

Welcome and apologies

PW welcomed local governors to the meeting. Lucy House had stepped down from her role of local governors. Balance of Brayford based and Umberleigh based local governors discussed.

Sign off previous minutes

Meeting not yet quorate.

Matters arising brought forward by Chair

None not on agenda later.

Correspondence

No correspondence.

Monitoring and Accountability

Spring curriculum Update KS1/KS2

Including Lockdown 3 review

CS explained staff had had to change the planned spring term to be suitable for online learning. Children were now back in school, and staff had been able to incorporate items originally planned for earlier in the term.

Brayford – both classes were working on Spring related topics. Infants were looking at Spring and how to keep active and healthy. Juniors

were being Spring explorers. Lots of activities were taking place outside – including looking at flowers and insects and making bug hotels.

Umberleigh – Infants were continuing the memory box history topic which had started during remote learning. The class were talking about how things had changed over the years, focussing on games and schools. Texts in literacy had linked to personal, social and emotional wellbeing, which was proving successful. Juniors were completing a mini project on mini beasts with a science focus, looking at how animals were classified, and creating flow charts of food chains and food webs. It was hoped they would be able to make a mini beast sculpture at the end of the topic.

As always, staff tried to keep learning fun, with lots of outdoor work, and also spending time focussing on elements children had missed while schools were closed, such as working together in a team, sharing, and talking about feelings.

HC arrived 1.50pm. Meeting now quorate – previous minutes agreed as accurate record of the meeting, with addition of HC to list of those present.

How had children coped during this time of virtual learning? CS reported that children had returned to school with a good attitude – there had been a development of independence in some children. Some children had had accelerated progress in reading – accelerated reader tests had been used to benchmark this. CS stated that it had been more challenging for staff this time, as the school had remained open for pre-school children, children of critical workers and vulnerable children. CS explained it was a challenge to determine which children should be in school in some cases – the list of critical workers was vague in some areas, and judgement was needed in what was classed as a vulnerable child.

Staff had monitored children's progress – there had not been the dip in maths this time, and there were no areas causing particular concern.

All classes had the use of Google Classroom this time – this was easier for staff to keep in contact with children, but challenging for some families with poor internet connection. Older children had been able to take more responsibility for their learning as they had their own log in. Staff adapted plans as time went on, building on feedback received from parents. CS felt that the planned online learning allowed flexibility where families needed this – parents were given a plan for the day, and offered times where teachers were available online. Many children had logged in for the live sessions. Time was allowed during Zoom sessions for social interaction between children.

CJ arrived 1.55pm.

CS explained that staff had worked to reassure parents that they could adjust the set work to suit their own circumstances. There had been a lot of negative language in the media about children being behind/never catching up – staff were working to reassure children and parents to try and dispel these fears. Google Classroom made it easy to provide feedback on children’s work, and weekly awards had continued.

CS stated that the school had lent out some laptops to families that needed them, and explained the support provided to parents on how to use Google Classroom where this was needed. CS felt that staff had been very flexible and supportive. All had taken responsibility for their class, and made the experience as enjoyable as possible. A broad curriculum had been provided, including music, French and art.

Monitoring standards

Covered in Head of School Update.

School specific SIP Updates:

- SIP and Progress at UMBERLEIGH
- SIP and Progress at BRAYFORD
- Lockdown 3 catch up need assessment

CS stated that staff were clear on what the vision was, and what the four drivers were. The school values had been discussed and decided. Children would do some work on these during the summer term, including some special value days – looking at possibility of doing some art work around them. Values chosen were happening in school already, but it was important to make them visible and highlight their importance. CS explained the values were not just for children, but were for all the school community.

A lot of work had been happening around the curriculum – staff across TEAM formed curriculum teams, which met together virtually and were completing action plans. These were ensuring that children would get to where they needed to be at the end of Year 2/Year 4/Year 6. CS explained knowledge organisers, and how these would be used to help children remember what they had learnt about a topic in previous terms.

Wellbeing champions – CS explained staff wellbeing champions had been introduced in both schools.

Assessment policy had been introduced, and the PHSE curriculum had been updated in line with national requirements. The use of Tapestry in EYFS was very positive.

SEN children during lockdown – children with an EHCP were offered a school place. Other children with SEN received some one to one virtual support through the week. *Could the impact of this be seen?* CS stated that it was too soon to be seen, but staff felt it had helped.

Catch up needs assessments – CS stated that children had a good grasp of concepts in maths, but needed some support with reasoning. Writing was also harder to teach virtually as it required modelling, and was also a two way process. Spelling also needed support. There would be a focus on these areas. Teachers in both schools had reported that children in the infants class who found reading difficult had continued to do so – it was likely that those who found reading harder were those who did not have as much opportunity to read at home, which would have continued during lockdown.

Children were enthusiastic, positive and happy to be back in school. Some time had been spend on the first day back reminding children what was expected in school – for example putting hands up to talk – but they had done really well.

Was there a difference in children who had been in school throughout lockdown, and those who had stayed at home? Staff had reported that those who had been in school got used to the school looking different, and had found school reopening difficult as they had got used to a different way of working. Children in school had received the same provision as those at home. Children who had returned to school after being at home had found school the same as they remembered, and had easily settled back in.

Safeguarding Report

SD stated that her last full report was from December. Spring meetings were happening next week.

SD had met with each head of school to review the autumn term, and the impact of the previous term. All heads of school had been delighted to welcome the children back in September, but initially had to deal with some anxiety in staff, children and parents. Statutory safeguarding requirements had been fulfilled.

In Brayford there had been no MASH referrals from September to December, although significant support had been provided to some families.

Watching brief and support continued for these families. There had been five Pupil Premium children in the previous term, and one child had been awarded a low level funding EHCP.

In Umberleigh there had been no MASH referrals. Seven Pupil Premium children. KS2 had a significant number of additional needs – 1/3 of class had an EHCP or were on the SEND register. Were looking to appoint further adult support in this class.

Wellbeing days – these had been extremely well received across the trust. Staff were very appreciative of these days, which helped them to feel valued in what was a particularly difficult six months. The days had to be taken in a short amount of time due to the school closures, but were continuing for this year. Trustees intended to keep these days going forward.

SD had met with BP at the end of the term – BP maintained a Covid register for all the schools, detailing who was awaiting test results, which was updated daily. Brayford had had 9 Covid related absences, Umberleigh 11.

In December the Local Authority Safeguarding Audit had been completed. SD was pleased with how TEAM was in term of what was in place for safeguarding, but areas for development had also been noted.

SD stated that the post Brexit amendment for the SCR had been completed.

Local governors thanked SD for her work.

Covid 19 current challenges

Mostly covered earlier in the meeting. CS stated that having to maintain bubbles was hard, but staff understood why this was important. Children were missing the interaction with the other year groups. Group learning experiences were also being missed, and there were some children in KS2 in particular who would benefit from spending time with KS1.

Additional handwashing took time, and had to be allowed for when planning the day.

Staff were quite stretched at lunchtime – as children had to be kept separate more duties were needed. Timings had been adjusted where needed to allow staff to have a break at lunchtime.

Staff wore a visor or mask when working closely with children, and in communal areas.

Health and safety report/premises governor

BP and SW continued to complete visits – CS stated she and SW had completed visits for Brayford and Umberleigh recently. No big issues to report. Agreed to leave appointing new H&S local governor until they were able to come into school.

Policy Review:

- PHSE/RSE
- Assessment and Feedback

Local governors agreed both policies. Local governors were reminded that parents were entitled to withdraw their children from RSE. Agreed it would be useful for local governors to have an introduction to the software used for assessment and data.

Strategic

Umberleigh Park and Play equipment update

Car park was now in use.

Opinions from parents and children had been sought for the play equipment. Children of all ages had wanted swings. Popular requests were swings, slides, zip line and see saw. PW reported that community opinion had been similar. Benches had also been noted, with one child highlighting the need for shady seating on hot days. There had been requests for the equipment to be as natural as possible – eg made of wood rather than metal.

After Easter the hedge was being planted. Planning stipulations required the surface to be fully permeable, which may cause an issue for high apparatus as these needed safety surfaces. Advice from companies that provided the equipment would be sought.

CJ had spoken to some play equipment companies. PW stated that the village hall had accumulated some additional money, and could possible donate some. Also possible that the PTA could arrange specific fundraising. PW and CJ to continue work on this.

Review pupil numbers, projected numbers, staffing

Umberleigh – a few new families had moved into the area. Currently 45 on roll, will be 47 in the summer term. Currently 15 children attending Brumblebees, will be 20 in September. 56 on roll in September – very positive. Fluctuation of numbers in small schools discussed.

Brayford – currently 35 on roll. 7 children attending Brumblebees, would be 10 in summer term, but down to 4 in September. Would do another leaflet drop to raise awareness of the provision.

Brumblebees update, numbers, staffing, accommodation

Numbers included earlier.

Umberleigh Brumblebees was becoming full, to the point of not being able to offer places to all who wanted them. A planning application had been made for an additional building, similar to the present building. This would be built next to the current building, with a covered link between the two, and covered outside space. Will hear the result of this in the Easter holiday.

Interview was taking place the next day for an additional staff member for Brumblebees – this would enable additional children to attend, as the older Brumblebees would be able to use a separate space in the summer term in the afternoons.

Two new MTAs had been appointed at Umberleigh, as well as a new cook.

Attendance including PP data

Since reopening of schools, Umberleigh overall attendance was 98.9%, PP 98.64%. Brayford overall attendance was 95.3%, PP 87.5%. CS explained the support for children with high absence, with the support of the EWO.

Update on Academy Trust

Trustee meeting was happening next week.

Local governors wished to convey their thanks to Lucy House for the work she did as a local governor.

PW stated she was disappointed that apologies were not received from those who were absent. It was acknowledged that attending meetings could be difficult, but it was important to give advance notice of absence. VG to ask for response when next agenda sent out.

Meeting end 3.19pm.

Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 13th May, 1.30pm.