

CORE GROUP REVIEW AND PLANNING MEETING (remote)
Tuesday 14th April 2020 at 1.30pm
Minutes

Present:

Simon Ball	Head of School - DCE
Paul Blackburn	Chair - WDCE Governors
Andrew Bradley	Chair of Governors – St. Wilfrids
Bev Burrows	Head of School – St. Elisabeths
Paul Good	Chair – Trust & DCE (MDBE)
Lee Jamieson	Chair - St. Elisabeth's Governors
Hannah Large	Head of School - WDCE
Helena Miller	Head of School – St. Wilfrids
Matt Whitehead	Executive Headteacher

In attendance

Kathy Crotty	Clerk
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1. Introductions and Attendance

Paul Good welcomed all chairs and heads to this meeting. There were no apologies as all members were present.

2. Current home provision update/forward plans

DCE – Simon Ball

There has been no new learning to report due to the Easter holidays. Week three begins on the 20th April and staff will send out new content this Sunday or Monday. The first two weeks of home learning was largely revision. Now, this is the summer term new content is needed. The school may utilise BBC Bitesize; video presentations; and PowerPoint. The home learning newsletter for week five is almost ready.

WDCE – Hannah Large

The half termly plan has been sent home, and this includes new learning. Teachers will be delivering examples of new learning. Up to now the school has sent mainly consolidation work. New learning is to be discussed with the team via the first zoom meeting scheduled for the 15th April 2020.

SWCE – Helena Miller

St. Wilfrids has started to use Purple Mash for home learning. Staff went back to school today so content has been uploaded by staff this morning. There is a planned discussion for this Thursday with the leadership team to plan for the Yr5 pupils.

SECE – Bev Burrows

St Elisabeths has set up Seesaw for home learning. Letters have been sent to every child with their login ready for the new term next Monday. Staff are now ready for the new term. If the school has not heard from a child this will be an alert for the DSL (designated safeguard lead). The school has given links to Oxford Reading and White Rose activities. Families are accessing parentmail and there will be books and papers left in the foyer for collection for those families unable to print.

Matt Whitehead gave a big thank you to the Heads of Schools who are working very hard to ensure key curriculum areas are not being neglected

3. Current school-based provision update/forward plans

DCE – Simon Ball

DEC has between 10 and 15 children each day. Over Easter the activities were low key and informal and it was non-uniform. The school can now stretch to three teams each working six days on and six days off. The SLT have a zoom meeting planned for tomorrow.

WDCE – Hannah Large

WDCE has only seven children in school today. There are still two teams for staffing. Children made Easter cards last week, and only two adults plus the SLT were needed in school. Hannah Large is ensuring the rota is equitable.

SWCE – Helena Miller

Tesco have donated Easter eggs to the children who were in school which went down well. The teams are not changing. There are two teams in this week. There were between 9 and 21 children in school last week, this week there are 13 children in school. Only one member of staff remains in self-isolation.

SECE – Bev Burrows

St. Elisabeths had theme days last week and lots of creative activities. Home learning packs can now be returned to school. The school intends to keep the two teams who are now on week four. Currently, each staff member is working one day a fortnight. Using paediatric first aiders more if under fives in school.

Paul Good on behalf of the CoGs formally thanked the heads for maintaining learning in these exceptional times.

4. Safeguarding matters and vulnerable children

DCE – Simon Ball

Simon Ball reported there are no concerns since the last meeting. Vulnerable children are being checked and parents are receiving this well. Some parents identified they were struggling with children doing school work and school has reassured parents about the priorities for households. The most vulnerable child has been in school all the time.

WDCE – Hannah Large

WDCE chose to not have vulnerable children in over Easter public holidays, but they are due in next week. Early Help has been contacted for one family and a food voucher for another family is being sought.

SWCE – Helena Miller

Three families with vulnerable children have received warnings from the police for not social distancing. One parent has been rude to staff which was upsetting but this has calmed down. This will be monitored.

SECE – Bev Burrows

Three or four children were in school on good Friday. One family has come on the radar and the police will be contacted. This family is self-isolating but the safest place for the children would be at school.

It was agreed that if the issue at St Wilfrid's continued, the matter should be reported to the police.

Matt Whitehead formally thanked all staff for caring for vulnerable children.

5. FSM provision

DCE – Simon Ball

MCC (Manchester City Council) have provided for the two weeks of the Easter holidays and the national voucher scheme (Edenred) starts on Monday. Edenred are experiencing some difficulties due to the increased demand for their service. This school has some families who are entitled but not claiming and the school is encouraging the families to apply for the vouchers.

WDCE – Hannah Large

WDCE will check all families are registered for the national scheme.

SWCE – Helena Miller

St. Wilfrids have received an email from Edenred about the high volume of requests so this week packed lunches will be provided and the vouchers next week.

SECE – Bev Burrows

The voucher application has not been resolved and the Edenred portal is still inaccessible. Each child has to be inputted and this is being accepted as "pending". This might be unique to Stockport. The school has rung families to check they want a packed lunch to avoid waste. The school discovered one family has not been collecting the packed lunch but using food bank instead. Some food boxes have been delivered to the school for the six most priority families. Totally Local are providing the lunches.

Andrew Bradley has spoken to one of the local councillors who has asked schools to be extra vigilant regarding poverty issues. Each area in Manchester should now have an operational Covid 19 compassionate response team.

6. Staff Recruitment and NQT matters

Staff recruitment has been delegated to the Executive Headteacher with Heads of Schools and it was suggested governors are involved in this.

DCE needs an advert to backfill the office when the SBM appointments occur.

Paul Good asked if there was likely to be any resignations before 31st May 2020. The discussion answering this is reported in the Part 2 Confidential Minutes. The teaching vacancies were identified as a priority.

NQT matters

The Executive Headteacher reported NQTs can be processed and progress to M2 or this can be delayed. This will be a decision for each Head of School. This has been reported in the Part 2 Confidential Minutes.

7. Forward planning for restart of 'normal schooling'

- The restart of 'normal schooling' is expected to be three weeks away or longer. Governors felt the return maybe for the last half term. Matt Whitehead reported there are no major issues anticipated. There might be staff anxiety to manage especially if this is soon. There will be staff with underlying health conditions When restrictions are lifted there could be another spike which may be concerning. It was noted that parents will also be anxious about sending children into school. Parents congregating in the playground might be an issue. When the schools reopen the hygiene measures will continue. Staff will be mindful of the children being anxious and may need to do circle time, and the PSHE team may need to focus on these issues. Children might have been directly affected by the pandemic.
- There is a concern that vulnerable staff might have to remain isolated so the opening might have to be partial and be more child care than formal schooling. DCE is missing staff from Yr3 Yr4 and Yr5. Some staff have been told to isolate for 12 weeks. The school can only follow government advice and will have to manage with the staffing available.
- Staff have asked if they need to do reports. St Wilfrids and St. Elisabeths are preparing reports now whilst not in school. The view was the report can cover two thirds of the academic year so this is expected to be done across the Trust. Very few children will have met their AREs (age related expectations). It was agreed the report can identify the AREs attained up to Easter. The Yr6 children report might include expectations had the year continued.
- It was noted some acceleration will be needed during the next academic year. National Guidance has stated no school will have progress measures for this year.

8. Staff Welfare and other staffing matters

DCE – Simon Ball

Simon Bell reported staff are fairly settled. DCE has more staff available since the last meeting. There is good support among staff. Some staff will need support to return to work.

WDCE – Hannah Large

WDCE has a welfare group set up and the first Zoom meeting will occur tomorrow. There will be a weekly Zoom staff meeting.

St. Wilfrids – Helena Miller

The staffing at St. Wilfrids has not changed since the last meeting. Some staff are absent with sick notes. Staff who were self-isolating are returning today. Welfare calls are occurring.

St. Elisabeths – Bev Burrows

St. Elisabeths has three staff absent with sick notes, and one other member of staff is due back with a return to work schedule needing to be implemented. Some staff thought they were living with vulnerable people and now can come back to work. Three members of staff have identified they are vulnerable but there is no letter from the government or other medical evidence. This is currently being honoured as the school does not want the responsibility of staff becoming ill on returning to work. It was suggested across the Trust if there are sufficient staff this self-identification should be accepted. Asthma is an area where there are many degrees of vulnerability so it was agreed the staff member needs to make the decision about their level of vulnerability. Paul Good noted this will be a school by school approach influenced by staffing levels.

9. Financial Outturns and Benchmarking (Matt Whitehead)

- Matt Whitehead had shared the report in advance of the meeting. The accounts show St. Wilfrids breaks even. WDCE in on track with the revised forecast. WDCE has spent more on premises due to items such as the electronic gates. WDCE has a healthy carry forward. St. Elisabeths (covering a 10-month period) is currently approximately forecast in credit of £20,000 in credit. There is a projected £53,000 carry forward and projected end of year surplus of approximately more than £90,000 which is healthy.
- The finances of DCE reflect the different funding allocations and this is reported in the Part 2 Confidential minutes. St. Wilfrids also have high staff costs to revenue; this reflects lower income. The accounts include depreciation and pension liabilities which is beyond the control of the Trust. Last year there was a £12,000 in-year surplus.

10. Public Holiday provision

The next public holiday has moved from the 4th May to the 8th of May. The last public holidays were managed well by the schools. It is assumed the schools would be open at May Half term and bank holidays. All heads reported the staff are expecting the rota to occur and the school to be open. At St. Elisabeths opening will depend of the shift patterns of some families.

In answer to the question about paying staff extra, no school has had to pay for additional hours.

In answer to the question about additional costs to schools this can be claimed from the DFE such as for additional cleaning and expensed accrued from the additional days open. This might also include additional costs for energy and premises. Each school was asked to keep a record of additional costs. The process for claiming back has not yet been determined.

It was confirmed LGBs are not expected to meet and this core group is operating in lieu of LGB meetings. Pupil progress and curriculum development are the main functions of LGBs and these are exceptional circumstances, in which these do not apply. These minutes are shared with governors. It was reported all usual business of the churches is also suspended. The agenda of this group covers all recommended governance issues. Lee Jamieson reported he is updating St. Elisabeths governors with regular updates.

It was agreed to undertake parent elections in September.

The letter to parents from the Executive Headteacher was well received.

11. AOB - Admissions

Schools are now receiving their admissions lists. It was agreed schools would offer places electronically and chase non-replies later. The paperwork can be completed when schools reopen.

12. Date and time next meeting (remote)

Tuesday 21st April 1.30pm

13) Closing prayer

The closing prayer was led by Andrew Bradley.