

**Didsbury CofE
Local Governing Body REMOTE Meeting
Tuesday 29th June 2021 at 7.30pm
Minutes**

Present:

Catriona Arundale	Foundation Governor
Nick Bundock	Foundation Governor
Simon Ball	Head of School
Kate Catling	Parent Governor
Paul Good	Chair (MDBE)
Sam Morgan	Staff Governor
Matt Whitehead	Executive Headteacher

Apologies

Abbie East	Foundation Governor
Matthew Lee	Foundation Governor
Helen Stallard	Foundation Governor
Joyce Thom	Foundation Governor

Absent

Philip Robinson	Parent Governor
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In attendance

Kathy Crotty	Clerk
Ruth Whittaker	Subject lead for Science & DT

Any text in red bold italics represents a Governor question (Q); challenge (C); Governor and/or clerk support (S). Black bold upright represents decisions and actions.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Governors were welcomed to the meeting by Paul Good. Nick Bundock led the opening prayer.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Helen Stallard, Joyce Thom, Matthew Lee and Abbie East.

3. Declarations of Non/Pecuniary Interest

- Catriona Arundale; Helen Stallard; and Phillip Robinson, Kate Catling, Abbie East, and Matt Lee, all have children in the school. Paul Good has a grandchild in the school.
- There are no other declarations other than those listed on the school website.

4. Subject Presentations

Science – Ruth Whittaker

- Ruth Whittaker explained Science is a core subject in the school and the recent book scrutiny shows great engagement in science. There are five different areas of inquiry which are a key aspect of the curriculum for the new academic year. These areas of inquiry are cross curricular skills: (1) pattern seeking; (2) research; (3) fair test; (4) observation; and (5) identifying and classifying.

S: *Governors noted this subject was exciting and stimulating.*

C: *As the subject lead, how are you monitoring science giving the challenges presented by Covid?*

Staff are expected to continue science in the home learning set for children. Knowledge and skills organisers enable teachers to identify areas of the curriculum missed, and this will be given to the new teachers.

Q: *Have you managed to do pupil voice and book scrutiny for science?*

- Pupil Voice was undertaken after the full reopening in March 2021. There was a KS1 book scrutiny a month ago to ensure the correct number of lessons are occurring.

S: *Governors were please science was able to be learned remotely. Parents noted the activities were interesting and were cross curricular.*

Design & Technology – Ruth Whittaker

- The recent emphasis has been to check this is DT and not Art. This subject has been hard to offer during lockdown, this is a subject where the children will have missed more. This subject tends to be delivered in units. The school now delivers a whole cycle of investigation, design, and creation of products. Children are encouraged to be independent learners. The creations designed are evaluated by the children and there is evidence of high level work in the book scrutiny.
- DT does link to other subject areas, but their projects will be kept in a folder. There are preparatory lessons before the day of creation, each product has a design brief identifying the purpose of the product.
- The Head of School paid tribute to Ruth Whittaker and the staff for their efforts during the pandemic. Staff have worked well to move away from producing 3D “Art” and have reappraised projects and this has challenged the children more. This gives breadth to the curriculum.

Q: *Parents do contribute some materials for DT. How does the school fund these other materials?*

- At high school children are expected to contribute for example to purchase ingredients for cooking. The school does provide the basics for activities such as pizza making, the children might want to bring some of their own toppings. Staff are reimbursed via the DT budget. Previously there was a DT cupboard for resources and staff often were not aware of what resources existed. Staff are encouraged to buy DT resources as they need them and claim this money back. (60% of purchasing is done up front).
- The Executive Headteacher noted the interesting move from Art to projects, and suggested it would be interesting to gauge over time if this increases resilience by learning to evaluate what is not working.

- Ruth Whittaker explained some of the children do often want the teacher to help them and the staff do emphasise this is ok.

C: Do the children do group work, as design teams can offer a range of roles?

The Yr6 children are involved with Young Enterprise Week where they work as a team. Children tend to want to produce their own product, but during this, they still talk to others and work collaboratively. All children do need to be involved in learning the practical skills such as sewing.

The Chair of Governors thanked Ruth on behalf of the Governors for her contribution as subject lead for Science and Design Technology and congratulated her on her appointment to the Senior Leadership Team.

Cat Arundale left the meeting at 8pm

5. Meet the children video presentation

- The Head of School explained the usual face to face meetings enable the school councillors to show their work and they talk to Governors about their role as school councillors. The video captured work children were proud of, and their role on the school council. The children showed their favourite work and explained what they learned and why this work was chosen. The Head of school explained although the children had a free choice of work to share, the work chosen to share with Governors was from a wide range of subjects.
- The school has been promoting recycling including clothes and this was evident in the presentations from the children. The children are engaged in returning lost property as part of learning to manage the earth's resources.

S: Governors formally thanked the school staff for their efforts to enable Governors to see the children. The whole school initiatives work well, and parents are fully supportive of the initiatives devised by the children. Governors noted the children's work was of a high quality and the presentation shows a degree of maturity. The children are using high level concepts and the Yr6 are ready to transition.

Governors gave formal thanks to the children and asked teaching staff to pass on the compliments from Governors.

6. Minutes of Previous Meeting held 27th April 2021 & matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held 27th April 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

There were no actions from this meeting

7. Minutes of the Significant Change Committee held 7th June 2021.

The consultation meetings have gone well, the rationale has been accepted. The only elements of concern were regarding increasing the numbers of children which might affect the care and quality of the provision. The Head of School reassured staff and Governors if there are cohorts of children with challenging behaviour this will be addressed. The ratio, class bubbles and the cohorts were discussed, and the school leadership reassured staff that staffing levels can be reviewed in the context of financial viability.

Governors involved in this committee were thanked for their work on approving the business plan and Simon Ball was thanked for the thought and care with which he undertook the restructuring of the EGKC.

The minutes of the Significant Change Committee held 7th June 2021 were accepted and ratified as an accurate record.

8. Head of School report

Admissions changes

The admissions arrangements have changed slightly in reference to P/LAC (previously looked after children), the amendment now includes P/LAC children who have been in state care outside of England.

Governors formally approved the revised admission arrangements.

The amended Admission Policy will be sent to the Diocese.

Yr5 Interventions Impact

This cohort are receiving more catch-up than other year groups. Evidence so far is children are improving with their recovery.

Staffing changes

The staffing changes include maternity leave cover.

Spring data

The spring data was shared and there will be a summer data report presented in the autumn term. This data can be compared to last year. The data shows progress is being made despite the home learning challenges. The children are only slightly behind the 2019 data (this is the most useful comparable data).

EAL children are doing as well as other children.

The Yr6 children recently sat the 2019 SATS papers and the results indicate the children would have done well despite missing eight weeks of teaching. The school does not seem to have the gaps faced by children in other schools.

School Improvement Plan update

Some areas are RAG rated red to highlight the areas which are continuing to be addressed. There might be too many priorities, most have been addressed. Next year the Head of School will adjust this to have less priorities addressed in more depth. The school has done well given the restricted opening.

Q: Will the catch up and interventions continue into September 2021?

Summer schools are being offered only by secondary schools so may benefit Yr6 children. There has been funding promised next year but the amount is not known, this year it was only £80 per pupil, it is expected to be £22 per pupil. £80 per pupil does not even fund a TA (teaching assistant). The Recovery Curriculum Commissioner argued the commitment from the Government was a tenth of what was needed, and resigned. The small amount of money allocated will be targeted carefully. Governors noted children in this school have supportive families and have continued learning from home.

Q: What is the impact of the recruitment and the movement of staff, how does this impact on the school leadership?

This school has had very stable staffing for three years. Some established staff developed their careers by moving to WDCE. The school now has younger staff so maternity leaves are expected. This is a small school (one form entry) the staffing is small, and this looks like much movement, but this is overdue. This has been a good process and the staff are very committed and will support the new members of staff.

The staff Governor explained the staff are conscious of health and wellbeing and staff naturally support each other. It was noted the operational decisions of staff deployment are taken for a variety of reasons including staff development opportunities.

Governors thanked Simon Ball for his report.

9. Behaviour and safety of pupils (Safeguarding) – update

There are no issues to report. The Executive Headteacher checks the SCR and children are interviewed. Behaviour issues are taken up with parents. There have been no exclusions and no incidents since the last report.

10. Executive Headteacher updates

Finance Update

- The additional costs incurred due to Covid has affected Kids Club more significantly, there was a £35,000 in-year deficit. The £80,000 carry forward from Kids Club has cushioned this deficit. The carry forward surplus of DCE meant the school could not claim for any additional Covid costs.
- The current end of May accounts indicates a projected £36,893 in-year surplus but this includes the £80,000 from Kids Club. The CFO commentary suggests there is a deficit is projected of minus £45,000, there is an in-year deficit for nine months of £50,000, and this is not likely to be much increased. Although the income, staff costs, and non-staff costs indicate the outlook for end of year is a £45,000 deficit, there is still a surplus carried forward from previous years.
- The budget forecast for 2021/22 includes the assumptions outlined in the business plan and this predicts Kids Club is viable and profitable. All income including grants was shared with Governors along with the expected expenditure projects an in-year surplus of £20,000 and reduced carry forward into next year due to Covid costs this year. Total staff costs to income is now 76%, the aim is to be less than 80% of costs. Trustees will be asked to approve the budgets for all four schools in the Trust. The budgets are pleasing in the context of increased costs due to the pandemic (mainly from extra staffing to maintain the integrity of the bubbles).

Q: Can an in-year deficit affect the Ofsted rating?

The finances are healthy considering this is a one form entry school. There is a £176,000 carry forward which is more than 10% of the income. This provides for the emergency scenarios and the maintenance of the building. Ofsted are more interested in the curriculum and learning. The ESFA will scrutinise the budget and they can send in auditors if there were concerns. This Trust benchmarks highly for support staff compared to other schools but this serves the needs of the children. It was explained historically finances was a key area for Ofsted when budgets became delegated to schools. The auditors compare schools with statistical neighbours and there are no significant budget issues.

Q: Is the Erasmus funding ring-fenced?

Yes this is ring-fenced for the teachers to visit Spain when allowed.

Trust Equality and Diversity Statement

All schools have revised Equality and Diversity statements and seek to be fully inclusive schools. The Executive Headteacher has revised this statement in response to comments from Governors. The Trust is keen to increase diversity across the Trust and this is a priority. This has been approved by Trustees.

Nick Bundock explained Governor vacancies are publicised and nominations are reviewed against a person specification. The process is open. It was explained the applications are the issue. The schools are local and limited in the diversity and DCE is located in a wealthy area. Affirmative action was not supported by the Trust.

S: Governors were supportive of the clear message and statement of the aspiration of the Trust.

Governors thanked Matt Whitehead for his financial update and for the Equality and Diversity Statement.

Governors formally noted the Trust Equality and Diversity Statement.

11. Governing Body Matters including:

Any training (online) undertaken

Paul Good has recorded his training on Governor Hub.

Link Governor Reports

There were no link Governor reports at this meeting.

The Chair informed the Governors of Helen Stallard's decision to stand down as a foundation governor due to family relocation. Thanks were recorded for Helen's service and contribution to the LGB and the Chair has written to Helen. The vacancy created is currently being advertised.

Nick Bundock is hoping another member of the clergy team can take his place on the LGB in September.

12. Policy approval

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Emma Lomas had undertaken a huge amount of work and has consulted widely. The Chair of Governors has not received any questions from parents. There were approximately 50 parents who responded. Several parents indicated the school was not introducing some aspects of the curriculum early enough. Some parents felt some topics should be delayed. The school is following a clear balancing of the views of the parents. The physical development of the children is a factor taken into consideration.

Q: Are parents given supporting material to explain the lessons to enable parents to follow up the learning?

The policy outlines the headline topics, and the subjects, and parents can ask for further information. Before the half term the parents are informed.

The Chair of Governors thanked Emma Lomas on behalf of the Governors for her contribution in developing the policy and undertaking a thorough consultation process.

Governors formally approved the SRE Policy

EYFS - Personal Care

Governors were informed this policy has been updated.

Governors formally approved the EYFS – Personal Care Policy

EYFS - Outdoor Play

Governors were informed the school has invested heavily in EYFS and KS1 in recent years.

Governors formally approved the EYFS – Outdoor Play Policy.

13. Date & Times of 2021/22 Meetings

Governors formally agreed the following schedule of meetings.

Tuesday 5th October 2021 at 7.30pm

Tuesday 16th November 2021 at 7.30pm

Tuesday 18th January 2022 at 7.30pm

Tuesday 8th March 2022 at 7.30pm

Tuesday 3rd May 2022 at 7.30pm

Tuesday 28th June 2022 at 3.30 (meet the children)

The chair will recommend some of these meeting to occur remotely.

14. Closing Prayer

The closing prayer was led by Nick Bundock.

Signed..... Date.....

Mr Paul Good (Chair)

Meeting closed at 21:35

There were no actions from this meeting