

Heathwood Lower School
Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting
Held on Wednesday 29 April 2020 at 5:00pm
(virtual meeting using Google)

In attendance:	Susanne Dove (SD)	Headteacher
	Paula Bangs (PB)	Co-opted Governor(Chair)
	Rose Gunter (RG)	C-opted Governor
	Hayley Fitch (HF)	Co-opted Governor
	Elaine DiCocco (ED)	Staff Governor & Assistant Headteacher
	Paul Dicker (PD)	Staff Governor & Assistant Headteacher
	Beth Sedgwick (BS)	Parent Governor
	Sarah Sandiford	Clerk

No	Item	Action
1.0	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence PB welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence had been received and were accepted from Jonathan Young. Carol Wyatt would join the meeting technology permitting. There were no declarations of interests for the meeting.</p>	
2.0	<p>School Closure due to COVID-19 Coronavirus As governors had last met just before the Government restrictions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 had been confirmed, the Headteacher gave the Board an overview of what had taken place. The school had been open to children of key workers from Monday 23 March as per Government instructions, but closed to all other pupils. Having compiled a list of “possible” pupils numbering 30, only 8-10 pupils did attend on the first day. Governors questioned why the number had been less than expected. This was because Government guidance had changed between Friday 20 March and Monday 23 March, making it clear that parents should keep children at home if at all possible. Guidance for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) had also changed over those few days. Following a suspected case of COVID-19, the school had been closed immediately and a deep clean undertaken at a cost of £800. It was understood that the school would be able to reclaim this expense.</p>	
3.0	<p>Provision for children of key workers Following discussion between four local Headteachers, a “hub” had been created at Vandyke Upper School. This had started on 30 March and meant it was not necessary to keep four sites open. Each school had their own room at Vandyke and timetabled use of communal areas. Generally, one or two Heathwood pupils had attended each day. A minimum of two staff were needed daily for safeguarding reasons. A timetable for staff had been created, working two weeks ahead. Staff were attending roughly once per week. This was not only teachers but support staff – this was in fact more effective as it freed up teachers to be focussing on learning for other pupils. Approximately 12 members of staff had worked at least one day at the hub so were familiar with the protocols.</p>	

Signed as a true and accurate record

Chair:

Date:

Prepared by Sarah Sandiford, Clerk to the Governing Body

	<p>The Government procedure for free school meals had been slow to get underway. In the first week the school had purchased a food voucher for 13 families for the week. In the second week, when it was known that lockdown restrictions would be in place for at least three weeks, the school had purchased vouchers for 3 weeks and delivered these to families in need. The school should be able to reclaim the cost. Now that a formal system had been set up, families had been registered for the next three weeks. This had taken a significant amount of time to set up and thanks were expressed to the school office manager for doing this.</p>	
4.0	<p>Staffing matters</p> <p>SD had circulated a memo to staff prior to lockdown with a list of things to do. This included work on policies, progression documents, curriculum documents, online training courses, making resources for SEND children and contacting pupils. PD had led the school this week in a huge reading task for the whole school.</p> <p>Transition reports for pupils due to move to middle school still needed to be done.</p> <p>For the pre-school, a review of policy documents and areas of learning (e.g. communications and language) was being undertaken.</p> <p>It was positive that some support staff were able to work at the hub whilst unable to do their usual work. A brief update was given regarding casual staff.</p> <p>One member of staff was due to retire on 1 May and would spend the last day working with the children.</p> <p>Governors asked whether there had been any known cases of the virus amongst staff. Although there had been some illness amongst some staff and some families, the lack of testing meant this was not known.</p>	
5.0	<p>Vulnerable and SEND children</p> <p>SEND children and pupils with EHCPs had the option to use the Hub at Vandyke. Weekly calls were being made to all vulnerable families to check in with them, provide support and signpost to other sources of support if needed. SD had an emergency safeguarding contact number and email if needed.</p> <p>PD advised he had experienced difficulty in getting hold of the local authority and that responses were slow. Currently legislation stated that EHCPs were subject to annual review and assessments had to happen – it was up to schools to work out how to do them. The local authority risk assessments had been done but it had taken a long time for them to be issued.</p> <p>Families had been very welcoming of the calls and support from the school.</p> <p>It was suggested that other families might also welcome an occasional phone call to check in with them, although staff were already in email contact with pupils by responding when work was sent in. It was agreed to make this a priority in the next week.</p>	SD & team

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Prepared by Sarah Sandiford, Clerk to the Governing Body

	<p>Discussion took place regarding online learning resources and whether any pupils were unable to access these. This was not known, although parental feedback suggested that some software didn't work on some devices. HF suggested two other programmes which might be useful but it was agreed there was a fear of overloading parents with too much information and choice.</p>	
6.0	<p>Finance</p> <p>A budget variance report had been provided to the Board in advance of the meeting. HF gave a brief verbal overview but the Board was advised there was nothing significant to be drawn to their attention. Governors were reminded that some headings had been changed and funds vired to other headings to make more logical sense, as discussed at the previous meeting.</p> <p>Overall it was felt that the school was in a good financial position, which was positive given the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on council funding and future budgets.</p> <p>Ongoing work was taking place on the 2020-21 budget and this would be finalised next week. Three months of income had been removed as a "guesstimate", but the extent of lockdown restrictions imposed by Government could not yet be known.</p> <p>SD gave a brief overview of any changes to staffing and costs going forward.</p>	
7.0	<p>Back to work plans</p> <p>At present it was very difficult to know how the future might look, other than that the need for social distancing was very likely. This would be very difficult for young children to comprehend and would raise all kinds of issues, not just in classrooms but in the playground, arrangements for lunch break etc.</p> <p>A meeting of LC2 cluster Headteachers was due to take place the following week and this might generate more ideas on the way forward. Transition work would still have to be done in some way.</p> <p>It was felt that returning to school would be particularly difficult for SEND children due to the change in routine.</p> <p>Some staff were felt to be vulnerable and were self isolating, but none had received the Government/NHS instruction to shield for 12 weeks as far as the Head was aware.</p> <p>A brief discussion took place regarding sickness absence pay.</p>	
8.0	<p>Feedback from parents</p> <p>The timetable had been well received by parents.</p> <p>It was noted that there was a huge disparity between families in terms of their engagement with remote learning. There was a lot of conflicting information for parents and many were simply "winging it" from day to day. It was a difficult time for everyone and the priority had to be to try to keep everyone's spirits up.</p>	
9.0	AOB	

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	<p>9.1 September intake: the school was fully subscribed with 20 children on the waiting list. HF would send governors the link to the relevant information on the CBC website, for information.</p> <p>9.2 Middle schools: the majority of Heathwood pupils would be going on to Gilbert Inglefield. Two year 4 pupils had EHCPs and transition arrangements were yet to be confirmed.</p> <p>9.3 Governors asked about the site agent and were advised that a lot of pro-active work had been done on site including re-felting of the shelters, building a fence around the outdoor classroom and a number of other tasks.</p> <p>9.4 New Barn residential trip: this had been provisionally moved to the last three school days in July.</p> <p>9.5 Bank Holiday Friday 8 May – it was not yet known if the Hub at Vandyke would be open on that date.</p> <p>9.6 Next meeting – it was agreed to meet again after the next Government review of restrictions, on Weds 13 May at 5pm.</p> <p>Governors thanked the Headteacher and all school staff for everything they were doing in the difficult circumstances.</p>	
10.0	<p>Close of meeting The meeting closed at 9:15pm.</p>	

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