



Minutes of Thirsk Community Primary School Governing Board held Online on Monday 8 February 2021 at 6.15pm

Present: David Duffey (DD) (Chair), Richard Chandler (RC) (Headteacher), Jason Tazzyman (JT) (Vice Chair), Stuart Mountford (SM), Jenny Buck (JB), Lucy Minican (LM), Gemma Wall (GW) Lisa Garthwaite (LG) Becky Kaufman (BK)

Apologies: None

In attendance: Sheila White (Clerk)

No 20/21	Item	Action
PART 'A' – Governance		
5.1	Welcome The Chair opened the meeting at 6.15pm and thanked all governors for attending.	
5.2	Apologies and determine whether absences should be consented to There were no apologies. RC advised that BK was present predominately for item 5.9. Governors consented to BK attending the whole meeting.	
5.3	Declaration of Interest There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting.	
5.4	Notification of any other urgent business None.	
5.5	Correspondence RC and DD had received an extremely complimentary email from a parent praising the work and commitment of teaching staff. The email is much appreciated and has been shared with the staff mentioned. This is discussed again at 5.11.	
5.6	Approve the Minutes from 14 December 2020 <u>Approval</u> – The minutes of the Full Governing Board (FGB) meeting held on 14 December 2020, which were circulated to all governors prior to the meeting, were deemed as a true record, with the following amendment and will be duly APPROVED and SIGNED by the Chair, DD. <u>Amendment</u> 4.12 There is a typo in the Equality Policy on p4, 2.2, 1 st bullet. Idiociess should be replaced by indices.	
5.7	Matters arising 4.7 RC clarified that JB, LM, LG and SM attended the safeguarding training. DD had done a similar course two months prior. RC advised that the latest safeguarding update concerning the partial opening of schools is on the school website and all staff are familiar with it. 4.11 RC advised that on investigation, volunteers were allowed in schools and he had advised JB of this. However the situation has now changed again and volunteers are not allowed in school at present. JT joined the meeting at this point.	

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	<p>4.12 RC advised that the photographer does not require a DBS check. The photographer is never unsupervised in school. RC further advised that the consent form signed by parents includes a disclaimer re the taking of individual and group photos.</p> <p>The equality policy's wording to be corrected as at 5.6 above.</p> <p>Governor led nursery is on the agenda at 5.10.</p>	Head
5.8	<p>Governor Training</p> <p>JB has done two seminars on finance plus a session on complaints.</p> <p>LG has done preparing the board for the future and introductory finance.</p>	
PART 'B' - Resources/ Improvement		
5.9	<p>Remote learning update</p> <p>A report on remote and in school learning was circulated to all governors prior to the meeting. The school closed on 4 January to all pupils except those of critical workers and those that are vulnerable. It was a huge challenge to ensure the learning offer for in school and remote learners in such a tight timescale. During this period of school closure there has been a far greater emphasis on how we continue to support children with learning rather than simply attending to their wellbeing as during the first lockdown.</p> <p>Learning is mainly via pre recorded videos on the e school platform. To try and balance the ability of the school to provide high-quality remote learning and at the same time provide school places for those children who need them the decision was taken to allow teachers to work remotely. Pupils in school are assisted in using the teachers pre-recorded lessons. Years 1 and 6 have a limited amount of live teaching. In the week ending 29.1.21 a parental survey was carried out to understand the effectiveness of remote learning and gain an insight in to parents view about the current remote learning. The findings of the survey were on the whole very positive. There were 63 responses to the survey and this includes 92 very positive comments about the hard work of the staff and the quality of the on line sessions. Apart from this positivity the other theme that emerged was a desire by some parents for more live teaching. However the desire for this varied significantly between year groups and only a tiny proportion of respondents wished for all live learning. Following the survey the school will aim to make more learning 'live'. To do this we will be using Microsoft Teams, this has better functionality to support wider teaching. We will be making the transition to this over the coming weeks. Again this must be balanced up against staff wellbeing, safeguarding and the wide range of technology and access for families. Currently Miss Gloag and Mrs Burrell are trialing sessions and identifying what works as well as considerations for wider implementation. Although it is not known when schools will return we will continue with this implementation with the awareness that further lockdowns or bubble closures are likely to occur.</p> <p>The Remote Learning governors have undertaken/ are in the process of completing the LA Remote Learning Audit with the Remote Learning Leader Miss Gloag. This is a large piece of work and will be useful should Ofsted wish to examine this aspect of school work.</p> <p>Engagement is being tracked carefully both in school and remote learning. Governors are regularly sent the weekly engagement tracker with up to date statistics. Engagement has improved over the weeks from 76% in week 1 to 89.4% in week 4. BK is leading on this and it takes up a considerable portion of time. It is difficult to make direct comparisons on the percentages as these vary according to how many children are in each class. Where less than five pieces of work are returned a traffic light system is alerted and BK follows up each case. Teachers will exceptionally make an</p>	

	<p>assessment at half term with a rough RAG rating and this will be used as a marker for catch up when pupils return to school.</p> <p>School learning update</p> <p>Each week more families request that their child can attend school. As well as the proscribed categories of children eligible to attend the school has leeway to invite those considered vulnerable at a local level. There are quite a number of children in this category. Currently 94 children are in school which is 46% of pupils. Children of critical workers are not necessarily in all week.</p> <p>From Monday 25th January the vast majority of staff have started regular testing using Lateral Flow Devices. These test are twice a week and the results logged on the government reporting website. The results are also shared in school. This has been a positive and reassuring development for staff.</p> <p>There has been one further positive test in school. The pupil involved did not begin to display symptoms for five days after they last attended school. Based on this information the decision taken in consultation with the DFE was that no further action was needed. Schools will be continuing to support the track and trace process during the half-term week. RC and BK invited questions.</p> <p>GQ: What percent of nursery children are included in the engagement figure? A. Quite a few nursery children are in school. Three out of eight of those at home are not engaging. It is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from some of the data expressed as percentages as it is not easy to translate this into numbers of children. This is due to the issues mentioned above and also some children attend school part of the time and will be counted in both the in school and home learners data.</p> <p>GQ: How many pupil premium children are not engaging? A. This figure has improved. 80% of PPG are engaging. 53% of disadvantaged pupils are in school. 20% of remote learners are not engaging.</p> <p>GQ: Are pupils entitled to free school meals receiving support? A. In the first week the school provided pack ups. In the second week food parcels were delivered and there was some negative publicity nationally about this. There is now the voucher system which is well managed by the school business manager.</p> <p>GQ: How is reading retention being assessed? A. It is hard to assess reading remotely, assessing comprehension is the probably the closest we can get. Phonics is easier to monitor. When pupils return it will be Piri and Puma tests.</p> <p>A lot of work goes into assuring the quality and consistency of the teaching videos. Leaders are happy McKie Mastery is being followed and lends itself quite well to this system of learning.</p> <p>Governors expressed their appreciation of the quality of work which is much improved from the first lockdown. On behalf of all governors DD thanked all staff for their work and dedication.</p>	
5.10	<p>Governor Led Nursery</p> <p>The consultation period finished at the end of December and the school received no responses to the consultation. RC checked with Helen Smith at NYCC who confirmed that governors now need to approve the scheme for it to be moved forward.</p> <p>GQ: Do we know any more about the planned nursery in Sowerby, it seems difficult to find any information? A. There is no further information about this.</p> <p>RC is aware that another school in Thirsk is struggling to fill nursery places. It is possible a lower birth rate is also contributing to the issue alongside the new housing and heavy marketing by another school discussed at previous meetings. Governors agreed that the longer term aim is to revert to a teacher led nursery once numbers improve and the marketing at 5.11 should help with this. The EYFS works extremely well and is a flagship part of the school. Getting disadvantaged children into nursery earlier is a very positive intervention.</p>	

	<p>GQ: Can we get a data set of where pupils live and which school/nursery they attend. Also does NYCC have projected information on birth rates /residency trends that would help with forward planning? A. RC will consult with NYCC.</p> <p>All Governors agreed to the conversion to a governor led nursery.</p>	Head
5.11	<p>Raising profile of the school action plan</p> <p>The plan was circulated to all governors prior to the meeting. RC advised that he had asked if NYCC are able to help with marketing and promotion planning but has heard nothing back so far. RC invited questions.</p> <p>GQ: The final section raises the possibility of taking action about parents posting unfavourable comments on social media. Are there any specific plans as to how this might work? A. No This is not a big thrust of the plan more of a secondary consideration. Staff understandably find it upsetting when events are misrepresented on social media. It is always a judgement call whether getting involved risks escalating the situation and to date it has generally been decided to avoid clashing head on.</p> <p>GQ: Is it possible to include on the website the positive comments from parents such as the email mentioned above and positive comments from the parental survey? A. This is being considered along with checking any GDPR implications. It may be that as long as the comments are anonymised they can be used.</p> <p>GQ: Instagram is a popular trend, as we have no in house expertise do we know anyone who could help with marketing on this platform? A. A colleague of a former governor is known to have done excellent marketing work free of charge for another body and it was agreed RC will pursue this. DD will also ask a contact of his.</p> <p>Paying for marketing expertise was discussed but rejected as being phenomenally expensive and also problematic given the school is publically funded. On this issue, it was pointed out that academies have an advantage as they are allocated a £10k promotional budget.</p>	Head Chair
5.12	<p>Feedback from link Governors</p> <p>GQ: What is the current situation with regard to catch up funding and does the budget monitoring reflect this? A. There is a freeze on catch up spending and this will be looked at again when the pupils return to school.</p> <p>GQ: Have we spent any additional monies on IT for remote learning? A. No. the school received 23 laptops, most have been distributed but there are still some in school. It is thought that families are managing currently using playstations Xboxes and smart TVs. It may be if more lessons are live that devices could again become an issue. Some parents approached the school requesting help with more data but this seems to have been handled with the suppliers. The school are not envisaging any further spend in this area.</p> <p>GQ: Is the new data system working as we wish? A. There had been one isolated disappointing theme in the new data but on investigation this is not a cause for concern. Data via Tapestry is still good as is all the other new data for early years. It is useful for EYFS to use the new data as that fits in with the rest of the school.</p>	
PART 'C' – Other		
5.13	<p>Policies</p> <p>The following policy was circulated to all governors prior to the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Child Protection addendum 	

	The above policy was approved by governors.	
5.14	Safeguarding / Child Protection RC highlighted to governors the child protection cases and safeguarding concerns at the school. It is clear that while everyone is impacted some families are particularly struggling and circumstances can change quickly plunging otherwise managing families into crisis. A good deal of staff time is spent following up and supporting pupils. GQ: Do home visits work? A. It varies, in the main yes, further information is obtained and most visits are successful in assisting the child. On occasion this doesn't happen. Whilst children are the responsibility of the parents/carers while at home clearly the school has a shared responsibility for their education.	
5.15	How has this meeting impacted on the welfare and progress of our pupils? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors reviewed and approved the home and school learning. Governors discussed and agreed the governor led nursery. Governors reviewed safeguarding particularly for pupils not in school. 	
5.16	AOB Governors discussed how to attract governors to the board particularly in the light of the need to recruit a new chair and vice chair and plan this succession. It was agreed that RC would advertise in the usual ways; newsletter, local businesses but also try Indeed recruitment and doctors surgeries. LG agreed to contact Lindsay Miller at NYCC to get something on the NYCC website. Further to the governors appreciation expressed at 5.9 it was agreed that LG will draft a letter to be sent to all members of staff.	Head LG LG
5.17	Confidential staffing/school update <u>Approval</u> – The confidential minutes of the Full Governing Board (FGB) meeting held on 14 December 2020, which were circulated to all governors prior to the meeting, were deemed as a true record and will be duly APPROVED and SIGNED by the Chair, DD. It was agreed to check whether this involves pupil premium and take it from there. There were no confidential items to discuss.	Head
5.18	Date of Next Meeting 8 March 2021 at 6.15pm 8 March 2021 12 April 2021 10 May 2021 14 June 2021 12 July 2021	
Please note: The colour coding above links to the three key roles of governance questioning; RED for 'setting strategic direction', BLUE for 'holding Headteacher to account for educational performance' GREEN for 'ensuring financial health, probity and value for money'.		

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting at 7.32pm

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