



Full Governing Body

25 March 2021, 4.30pm [by Zoom]

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

No apologies; all present

2. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest

3. Headteacher's report

The report had been circulated in advance, and generated questions about the low Reception numbers, the impact of this on the budget, and the OfStEd inspection timetable (following a recent remote monitoring inspection at another Wye Valley school).

Given that Reception numbers for September at other local schools (except Ludlow and Kingsland) are also lower, this is probably a mixture of (a) a year with a lower birth rate; (b) missed registration deadlines (particularly by parents/carers whose children have not been able to attend pre-school and have therefore missed reminders); (c) reduced marketing due to Covid-19. This will not affect next year's budget (funding is paid a year in arrears so based on the numbers already in school), and given the expected carry-forward from the end of the 2020-21 financial year, this should not present a longer-term budgetary challenge providing there are not several consecutive years with significantly fewer pupils on roll.

It was clarified that given that which OfStEd will be trialling new approaches to inspections after two years without data, and given that (apart from monitoring visits) schools in special measures will be the priority for Section 8 inspections, there is likely to be at least a year's delay in the date of the next inspection for schools not in special measures.

4. Budget for 2021/22

There are still too many variables for a final budget. However, even if everyone goes on to the next stage of pay progression and no further money is received for children who receive additional support this would still be manageable.

Governors noted the challenge of trying to use support workers throughout the school to help ensure the best provision for all children in addition to 1:1 support with specific children, and agreed with the approach of naming specific children in future contracts, even though this may slightly increase the risk of redundancy, to facilitate flexibility.

Jane will review the budget with Adam when it is finalised.

5. Pupil catch-up and assessment

Teachers will be considering any necessary interventions in the second week back after Easter, followed by six weeks of specific interventions as required. Teachers will then put each pupil on a ranked grid to hand over to the following year's class teacher. This approach is intended to provide meaningful information to next year's teacher without being too intensive. Catch-up will then take place over the next academic year.

The feedback from class teachers so far is that most children have made reasonable progress. Writing is expected to be the area which will need most work. Lucy has been developing methods of assessing science, and supporting teachers with this, so this is now working well. Adam is confident that teachers will be in a strong position to know where children are by September.

6. Christian distinctiveness

Adam and Matthew have been working together following Adam's SIAMS training. Matthew, Adam, Sallie and Liz will meet to develop a specific proposal for how this is integrated into the curriculum and will present this to the governing body at the next meeting.

7. Safeguarding

Orleton has not experienced the degree of safeguarding incidents that others have. In part, this is due to the work that Libby Bevan does. Some of her time has been freed up for supporting children who are being identified as needing support on return to school. However, few have needed this as, the school has taken a strong preventative approach during lockdown, inviting vulnerable children into school and identifying and supporting potentially vulnerable children, including through contact with Libby. In addition, as teachers were seeing children face-to-face on Zoom and doing registers each day this helped to flag potential problems early. The class email system and 'phone calls enabled teachers to work with parents very quickly if there were any problems. Governors expressed huge thanks to all the staff for all the work that went in to this communication, which was incredibly effective.

8. Committee updates

Curriculum & outcomes: the paper circulated on the music curriculum was summarised and discussed. There is real energy and enthusiasm from Nicola Eatherington (who is developing the music curriculum across both Orleton and Kimbolton) with a lot of exciting ideas, and both Camilla and Sallie noted that it is wonderful to be involved in such a positive process. Martin has been appointed to teach music and seems excellent. Work is ongoing with Lucy to agree how to redeploy PPA time to spread music over the course of the year rather than in short chunks. Camilla and Sallie will meet with Nicola and probably Martin in May.

Matt is coming back to work with Lucy on a school production. Governors were hugely appreciative of this, especially given the significance of the production after lockdown.

Finance and Pay & Personnel: no updates.

9. Chair of Governors' briefing update

Key points highlighted from the slides circulated were as follows.

1. Instrument of Government: three were noted as being sealed (including Orleton's) but there has been no word on ours. Mark has asked for an update as it was submitted to Herefordshire for signing in early December.
2. Charlotte Carter-Wall is working with Herefordshire on its Pupil Premium Strategy. As part of this, there is an offer of a Pupil Premium deep dive for schools. It was agreed that it would be valuable for Orleton to take advantage of this, jointly with Kimbolton. The risk of singling out particular children (of which there are 21 in Orleton) for additional support was discussed, and it was agreed that this needs to be handled sensitively to ensure that support is appropriate and proportionate. Liz was appointed as the link for Pupil Premium and will meet with Adam to discuss. Adam will review the Pupil Premium Strategy for the website.
3. Governors will be able to go into school from 21 June, and before then if the visit is risk-assessed. The July governors' meeting could therefore be in school. It was agreed that having a mixture of Zoom and in-person meetings may be appropriate in future, and that this will be kept under review.
4. The Council has agreed to fund the 10 laptops which the school bought to support home learning.

10. Pre-school & link governors

Funding has been provided by the Local Authority to support vulnerable children with holiday clubs and holiday packs. A holiday club will run over Easter. Staffing is currently being reviewed and a new post may be created. Financially, pre-school is in a relatively healthy position, helped by the resumption of after-school clubs. A consultant is due to visit and give some suggestions for development in support of short-term, medium-term and long-term planning. Significant staff changes may occur in the next two years, so in the medium term it is possible that pre-school will come more closely under the school's umbrella. This would ensure continuity of learning and experience from pre-school to year 6.

A second link governor is needed. This would involve meetings twice a term. It is a similar role to school governance but as the pre-school is a charity there are some additional compliance requirements. Interested parties were requested to contact Sallie.

11. School Food Company

There have been a number of changes since the update at the last meeting in order to stabilise the finances. Some difficult decisions have been necessary to make the business sustainable and able ultimately to repay the loan to the school for expanding the kitchen. For example, the Food Manager post has been made redundant (she now has a new job), tuck has been stopped indefinitely, meal prices have increased slightly from £2.20 to £2.30, and there is more choice each day, with baked potatoes or wraps offered alongside the main menu choice. Finances are looking more stable now, and take-up of meals has increased (other than the past fortnight when Luston has been closed due to Covid-19). The Assistant Cook has resigned and a recruitment process is underway, with interviews in the week of 29 March.

12. Minutes of meeting of 19 November 2020

Unanimously approved

13. Matters arising not dealt with elsewhere

None

14. Any other business

Mark was asked to circulate policies for governor approval in tranches ahead of the next meeting.

Adam was asked to ensure that the website be updated, including choosing newer photos from Facebook.

15. Date of next meeting

1 July 2021, 4.30pm [subsequently changed to 24 June 2021]