



## WEST CROFT SCHOOL

'Discover your Legacy'



Minutes for Governor Q&A Session held remotely on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 9am

Questions and answers relating to current school closure due to National Lockdown and Covid-19 pandemic

Present: D Ford, C Ley, C Callaghan, J Dymond (Babcock), C Marston (Deputy Head), T Page (Headteacher), K Kelly (Chair) and E Paine (Clerk)

Apologises: J Ebsworthy and M Mills

Key :                    **Green = decision**                    **Red = challenge**                    **Blue = action**

**Agenda Items discussed in the following order:**

- 1
- 4
- 2
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**Agenda Item 1**

Ratify Safeguarding Appendix relating to Covid school closure arrangements.

**Unanimously agreed by those present.**

**Agenda Item 2**

Update from CL regarding remote learning scrutiny (27.01.2021)

Notes from meeting circulated to Governors in advance of today to read.

CL explained that the Babcock Q cards had been used to review. More than happy with the provision being provided. Specific for our children. Live lessons not used, PowerPoints instead. TP and CM have a good handle and overview. Majority parents and staff happy.

**KK asked what sort of feedback had been received from parents.**

TP explained that overall the feeling is that what is being provided is high quality but is overwhelming. Speaking to 1 or 2 parents everyday who are saying they are struggling. Is difficult and we discuss as a team, but we just can't let everyone attend, but does feel morally wrong.

**KK noted it was very difficult for families, especially working families.**

TP agreed, we are going to have a Wellbeing day next Friday, day off curriculum and families can have fun with teachers. Thinking of doing coffee mornings etc to help boost morale. Increase in parents wanting children in school, so want to try and support but support so that the learning still happens at home.

KK noted that it was about making sure we are always reviewing what we can we do better. Overwhelming and guilt feelings for working parents. Zoom is great for the children to see each other but can be overwhelming, each child's circumstances are different. Finding a balance so everyone just doesn't give up.

CC added that as a parent she had received a letter from Bideford College, saying no sanction for not completing the work but concern is more about checking in and making sure the children are safe.

KK agreed, we are great on differentiating for vulnerable and most able, but also need to reach out to that middle group. Don't want to disrespect teachers as they are setting brilliant work but sometimes must feel too much for large number trying to juggle still having to work and home learning.

CM also agreed, trying to balance a large number of parents and pupils. Tough on teachers.

JD noted that was the challenge for all schools. Everyone the same, which sometimes helps you to feel better about it all. Great that you used the Q cards to unpick this. We know that remote learning will be a focus for Ofsted, the focus for Ofsted will be a focus upon effectiveness, not just provision offer. Mainly about what your community needs. Adapting to each community which is different. Like the coffee morning idea. Challenge of getting the packages right. Heartening to hear flexibility of allowing some children to come in to school when needed.

Next step is what is the effectiveness of what we are offering. What is the biggest difference to you as a learner if you can only do 10 minutes a day?

CM replied; we have been doing that for individuals but maybe we need to do as a whole school approach.

JD explained that the key questions were, what does the child need and then what package can the parent deliver to try achieve that. Invest time now on how we can utilise staff since this is already a longer term arrangement. Can parents talk to staff members for reassurance?

TP confirmed that parents evening was planned for the week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> Feb. Coffee mornings before that to start those conversations.

JD responded great, but remember is also about going forward. Parents evening can normally be about what your child has achieved up until now. Support will be needed for the upcoming weeks.

KK asked JD; what are the expectations of OFSTED? More about safeguarding or actual learning?

JD replied that it was more about the effectiveness of the learning.

KK – so tailoring of remote learning and non engagement?

JD responded yes, engagement is big part. Support and resources coming as to what schools should be doing. Get opportunity to almost have a mock OFSTED.

KK – so is it about drilling down in to progress of each pupil during remote learning?

JD replied, of course would like to see progress for all pupils in all lessons, but figure out for example does high engagement mean actual progress or is the work being provided too easy? Will be difficult to look at progress for all children. Have a few case studies. Free school meals pupils, high attainers etc. Consider how you can demonstrate that you have reshaped provision in light of a changing need for some children, may well be a family case study.

TP asked JD to clarify if a pupil has a personal package, overall progress might be less because you've only set half an hour work for example. Is it ok to demonstrate other engagement through that?

JD replied yes, might only be half an hour work but that child might have learnt it better than they would have if you'd tried to get them to undertake a whole package of work sent home. Could be measured in terms of enjoyment, supported the family etc is all engagement.

TP suggested 3 case studies for each class, covering range of pupils mentioned.

JD agreed, will also help teachers be more confident about talking about the quality and impact of the learning they are providing. Not just SLT.

KK questioned if family set up could be included in case studies. Most children in the same family will have similar vulnerabilities. Understand the families as much as the children.

JD agreed, good idea. Gives context of why the child is vulnerable. RAG rate where they were and where they are now because of your intervention. Like SEF or IEP.

KK noted that it is also about understanding the term vulnerable, doesn't always mean danger. Just about spinning too many plates for some and therefore learning can't happen full time.

CM agreed, each support package is different. Value what the children are sending in on an individual basis.

KK commented that if we have tailored that need, feel justified to feed that back to any external visitors.

CL added that this was briefly discussed in our review meeting. Moving it forward now.

CM noted that it was good to reflect and reshape. We've done initial expectations from Government but can and will always develop.

JD liked the idea of the case studies being for families. Agree there might be similar vulnerabilities. Review was really good activity for CL, TP and CM to do together. Shows Governor involvement, gives lots of different perspectives. Strength of Governors.

### **Agenda Item 3**

Update for Governors on the following points:

- **Number and percentage of pupils in school overall this week (or from a certain cut-off date) including Nursery as separate unit**

Reception – Year 6 – weekly average up to now has been 100 pupils which equals 19%  
 Nursery – weekly average up to now has been 133 pupils (out of 266) which equals 50%  
 Engagement spreadsheet gives more in depth weekly summary with accurate numbers and percentages. Above figures are an average for the weeks currently covered since school closure.

- **Number of SEN and PP and vulnerable pupils in school this week, include nursery as separate unit**

#### School

SEN – 18 (Only 10 due to additional needs, others key worker parents)

Vulnerable - 30 (inc 3 refugee, 1 CiC, 3 CP, 6 CiN)

PP – 54

#### Nursery

SEN – 7

Vul - 10 (inc 3 CiC)

PP - 14

- **Number of staff in school and what current rotas systems looks like e.g. number of teachers, support staff in school, number undertaking remote learning, number delivering packs to families**

One teacher, 1 TA, additional TA for any 1:1 support on a rota basis, arranged by each individual year group to ensure fairness, equality but also to work around staff's individual contexts (young families, partner's working patterns etc). I week 1, we only had 2 children out of the whole school who we hadn't heard from. Staff are delivering packs to those who need it, although we have tried to avoid that as much as possible by setting up lessons with no printing/worksheets and distributing packs of books, pens and pencils during the first week.

- **Number of positive cases, isolations, pupils sent home, staff isolating**

Currently zero positive cases in staff and pupils. 1 member of staff shielding for the entirety of the 6 weeks as vulnerable with GP note to confirm. Currently no other staff or pupils isolating (from internal or external contact with any positive cases). 6 pupils sent home so far but not in the last week, all prior to that and as a precaution.

- **Number of tests administered**

85 staff that are currently available to work, 83 said they would take LFD tests, 2 said they would not

71 members of staff have taken testing kits

48 results have been received back so far this week - 0 Positive - 0 VOID and 48 Negative

- **Testing procedures**

Emailed to all Governors last week

- **Changes to Risk assessment**

Emailed to all Governors last week

- **Free school meals provision – numbers, quality, how getting out to parents**

189 pupils eligible for free school meals. National voucher scheme being used as per previous lockdown. £15 weekly vouchers are emailed to parents who can then choose from a list of supermarkets to spend the vouchers at. We physically print the vouchers for any families you can't access an email address.

- **Engagement and progress of home learning**

We have a thorough record of engagement in home learning for each individual child each day. Teachers record this on a live document and use a traffic light system that can be easily analysed. Yellow - in school, Green - full engagement, Orange - partial engagement (teachers then stipulate what has/hasn't been completed), Red - no engagement.

Teachers then summarise this as a percentage for their class so we can see the trends week on week. The quality of learning on offer is high. We were keen to maintain high expectations and aspirations for our children, even when learning remotely. They have a full curriculum offer. The balance for teachers is supporting families where this amount of work is proving too much in a home learning setting. In this instance, the class teacher will contact the family and agree an achievable way forward.

- **Updates to how many more vulnerable pupils have joined back at school this week and why e.g. as a result of parents' decision or school supported discussions**

Pupil (mornings only) – Currently being assessed for ASD, Mental health issues impacting on family. Needs routine and structure of school. Parent discussion followed by SLT/school discussion.

Mixed Yr group family - Agreed days of the week – Safeguarding issues, supporting to meet needs of family in crisis. Parent discussion, VIST from police and SLT discussion.

Pupil (1 day per week) – Previously Child Protection, still concerns regarding vulnerability including: online gaming and monitoring of, disputes between family members. Non-engagement in remote education. Discussion with SG lead & previously offered a place.

- **Parent/carer feedback – positive and negative**

We are in contact with parents on a daily basis, providing support where needed, discussing and deciding whether children would be best off in school. The overall feeling

from the parents, in my opinion, is that they are very impressed with the quality of home learning on offer but quite a few are struggling with the expectations to complete it all at home.

Further questions from Governors:

**What about vulnerable families, those not at school but vulnerable or are aware of circumstances at home?**

**What are the SEND team doing to account for these children and monitor their situation?**

**How can we as a school be satisfied that these children are safe?**

**Numbers at school seem very low considering we have such high numbers of PP, SEND and vulnerable catchment. Where are the children and are they safe?**

KK clarified that her questions were about understanding as a school and community, that we know and understand our demographic. Know that we can demonstrate where our pupil premium children are etc. but we also have a large number of children who just fall below that line. Our numbers physical in school seem low compared to other schools.

JD/CM reminded KK that there was also context around that, if comparing to other local schools. Lots of teachers and NHS workers in those communities, so their percentages of attendance are higher. Other areas are very isolated and only have 5% in.

KK noted that we do have the demographic of children needing to be in. Have we got enough vulnerable pupils attending school? Can we confidently say that pupils that aren't in are safe, that we understand the gaps and why?

TP reassured that vulnerable children are attending school. Review daily, who, perhaps needs to come in. Best decision for child is the one made.

KK commented that as long as we understood the correlation between numbers in school and those not and were reviewing often that was ok.

CM explained that numbers do fluctuate, some children aren't in all the time, negotiated with some families a couple of days. Gives us opportunity to touch base and have eyes on the children.

CC questioned the 50% attendance in Nursery.

CM explained that as Nursery is 'open', percentage compared to school was always going to be higher.

CC noted that in some Year groups, particularly Year 5, there are significant needs attending. Those pupils wouldn't normally be all together, but now they are. Is that helping or causing problems?

TP explained that the plan was still trying to keep to one group/class per year, as much as possible so we don't need more staff in. Initial adjustment is to ask more support staff to come in to school if vulnerable needs continue to rise and have to be split.

CC – does that compromise our risk assessment?

TP replied not at the moment, still is a Year group bubble but trying to reduce cross over of staff so that cover can be arranged when needed.

JD questioned if the extra staff should be teachers rather than TA's.

CM replied that if it was teachers, that would put a huge amount of other work on the teacher at home organising the remote learning offer. Bespoke offer in Year 5 and staff are supporting those children well. Make sure we are providing for all the different children but not putting extra workload on teachers, which is already high. Trying the support staff adjustment first. If need be, teachers will have to come in, but we have to have a sustainable model for the longer term.

**School budget - what does it look like in this lockdown, lockdown 3 financial impact?**

KK noted that budget in first lockdown was unmanageable with the cost of printing, posting etc.

TP commented that the budget was coping better than last time. Learnt from first lockdown. Asked teachers not to create anything that needs printing etc. Home learning book given for that reason but also gives the benefit of more pride in the work going in that book, not just sheets of paper.

**KK asked if there were any other comments raised about data.**

EP replied no, no questions submitted from those not present.

JD commented that the regular meetings were great. Helps you keep on top of things. Reshaping and responding as you go. Effective way of Governors still asking the questions. Bullet points help show the changes very quickly. Good practice for each meeting. I'll continue to attend if that's ok. Working really hard and good things are happening and it helps me as advisor keep track of that.

CM noted that SLT were still trying to move the school forward too. Staff attended a rethink reading training session for example, still organising training and utilising time for when we come back properly. Training next week for teachers around effective teaching of geography via ODYSSEY.

**JD questioned the wellbeing of the staff. Difficult at West Croft, staff always have to work really hard and that's just how it is, but how are the staff?**

TP commented that the announcement of school closure until 8<sup>th</sup> March hadn't helped morale. Might bring a dip. Although, considering working remotely, does seem to be good sense of team spirit, sharing good practices and supporting each other. Tough but trying to support where we can.

JD suggested a coffee zoom morning for staff as well as parents.

TP agreed, need strategy for things that staff can join in with, quizzes, coffee mornings etc like in first lockdown. Really helped.

JD agreed, will help with reintegration on return, understandably will be anxiety about coming back in.

CM noted that staff are supporting each other well. West Croft is in better place to do that. Staff have been really honest with sharing what they are struggling with.

JD – what can you do to capture that feedback? Might be at coffee mornings, could be offload session. Give staff the opportunity.

CM noted the pastoral side of leadership is something she's always been interested in. Develop those relationships like you do with the children.

DF agreed, adding that you can see team spirit with take up in testing. Some staff doing it to keep colleagues and children safe, even though they feel the testing is obtrusive.

#### **Agenda Item 4**

Order requiring approval. Email sent to Governors in advance of the meeting.

*Good afternoon*

*We have been offered a grant from Bideford Bridge Trust towards the purchase of some Chromebooks. Over the last week, Karen has been running around trying to source them and all the add-ons, storage items etc that are needed. This in itself isn't difficult but finding somewhere that has them in stock has proven almost impossible.*

*She has managed to source 32 Chrome Books from TME who have them in stock ready to dispatch for us. Attached is a copy of the comparative quotes information etc that Karen has sourced for your information - the rationale for going with TME over the other companies is that they are the only company*

*we can find that has the items in stock, ready to dispatch for us to start using as soon as possible! A full quote from TME is also attached.*

*The order for this and the cabinets/licences etc comes to £9,605.06.*

*Bridge Trust are giving us the £7722.56 for the Chromebooks and the additional will come from the computing budget.*

*A class set of Chromebooks will help further enhance our new curriculum and add a reliable, technological element for the education of our pupils.*

*The total order is larger than can be signed for without seeking governor approval so please would you discuss this at your meeting and if you are happy for us to go ahead with this purchase please can you minute your approval for the audit trail.*

*Many thanks*

*Dawn*

CL questioned that when school reopens the laptops will be returned.

TP responded yes; parents/carers have signed agreements to return after remote learning finishes.

CL added, including those given from the Government?

TP replied yes, we are well-resourced now. Additions are improving ICT across the school – real boost for us.

KK clarified that the devices are only on loan to pupils, but will be returned to school and made use of in the classrooms?

TP confirmed that was correct.

### **Spend agreed by all Governors present.**

JD commented that she had put forward to County that West Croft would welcome anything additional that could be sourced.

DF asked if the role of the ICT technician will be reviewed in relation to this? Extra technology on site. Already difficult to deal with.

TP replied that new devices will replace some of our current laptops. Will be beneficial for teachers for example, lots of our current laptops are coming to end of life so we can do a straight swap.

CL questioned if it had been decided that portal laptops was more beneficial, than the previously discussed idea of an ICT suite.

TP responded yes, idea for ICT suite perhaps on the back burner for now. Priority is making sure the technology supports the curriculum.

**Key :**

**Green = decision**

**Red = challenge**

**Blue = action**