



WEST CROFT SCHOOL

'Discover your Legacy'



Minutes for Governor Q&A Session held remotely on 15th 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

TP asked KK if she would like to Chair.

KK suggested that TP start by explaining the current situation at school. Questions could be brought forward from there.

TP explained that due to the late announcement by the Government, there had been an element of using the first week to set up expectations and clear guidance, for both staff and parents for the week beginning the 11th January. Things are evolving with each day with practice getting stronger and our offer of remote learning catering for our parents' and our children's needs and individual circumstances. All staff including SLT have moved to a rota for example. We decided that too many people on site was a risk because of cross contamination. Only one member of SLT on site and other two will work from home.

JD commented that very few schools were doing rotas, having as many staff in as possible. Vulnerable, pregnant women etc at home, so shielding those and anyone else at school teaching smaller groups to try and catch up. Every school is different though.

TP replied that the decision was taken because of the large number of staff employed at West Croft. Want to keep contact at school low. No unnecessary contact.

JD asked what the current attendance percentage at school was.

TP responded between 19% - 25% attendance.

JD commented that was a good low percentage. Lots of schools much higher.

TP replied yes is good; we have vulnerable and key worker pupils in only. Being strict about key workers and mindful of parents just saying they want their children in. Risk of transmission if too many in and don't want that, but balancing this with providing a service for children and families that we deem vulnerable.

CM added that 3 members of staff, 1 teacher and 2 support staff are physically in school for each year group. Rest of year group team provide support and remote learning from home. Decision to have less staff on site is working well, for example member of staff at home because of wife being unwell, rota of staff meant we could swap members of staff so that cover in school is still provided. Staff aren't crossing each other and therefore we don't have to close bubbles because there has been no cross contamination. We have the option to

<p>bring in other people safely and on-site school and remote learning can run in sync. Working well for us.</p> <p>TP agreed, rota has been the right decision for school and is working well.</p> <p>JD asked if the risk assessment was up to date. Understand it will be a working document with all the constant changes.</p> <p>TP explained that the risk assessment was with DF at the moment. Changing daily. Distribute to Governors when ready.</p> <p>DF added that the risk assessment was currently with JE. JE is personally snowed under at work. Will send to staff as is today as working point. Very lengthy with new DCC adjustment.</p>	
<p>TP continued by explaining that school has a couple of registers in place. One 'online' version and obviously one for children physically attending school. Online version registers children checking in twice daily with their teacher via Zoom, engaging/contacting via Dojo and if there has been no contact at all. Safeguarding team then follow up if no contact is made, initially via Dojo but follow up call/email if needed. Script on what to say if no contact received, has been provided to teachers for a consistent message. Check technical problems or anything we can help with. Script supports younger teachers and NQT's – supportive rather than aggressive approach.</p> <p><i>Engagement spreadsheet shown to Governors on screen – green full engagement, orange partial engagement (detail of subjects), red no engagement and yellow in school.</i></p> <p>TP explained that the spreadsheet tracks engagement for safeguarding and learning. Also breaks down in to subject engagement – shows tracking for when back in school. Record of learning. Teachers can then also try to encourage engagement in subjects that are being missed.</p> <p>CC asked what was happening in terms of tracking engagement and safeguarding of those pupils who work was being delivered to, as they haven't got access to a device or the internet. Might check in intermittently via Dojo but ultimately, they don't have access to a device or the internet, or are sharing with siblings. Currently no way of their work being marked and they are perhaps our most vulnerable.</p> <p>CM explained that school has signed up to the Government scheme that provides laptops. List of children needing laptops has been compiled.</p> <p>CC commented that if the issue was not having any internet than a laptop would not help that. Conscious that we might be in this position longer term.</p> <p>CM replied that requesting routers were also an option as part of the Government scheme so school has done both. Hopefully will fix both issues.</p> <p>TP suggested that perhaps those pupils could receive weekly feedback. If staff are delivering work to home perhaps the system could be swap completed work with new work each week.</p> <p>CM agreed, adding that teachers have been asked to look at what their TA is allocated at home. Could be something that is arranged. Direct people in to doing that. Individual basis – enough staff to do that. Just allocation of time.</p>	

<p>JD observed that after listening to what CC is saying, it is important to capture what those children are doing. Additional vulnerability on those that don't have devices. You do have a buffer on some families being able to come in. Don't have to advertise 25% attendance but you can review to see which families can come in. Vulnerability may change over the course of lockdown.</p> <p>TP noted that this was already being done on a daily basis. Reviewing every day, have made decision to let some children come in – what is best for the children.</p> <p>KK asked, in terms of our high levels of pupil premium children, how do we know where they all are? Obligation to know what they are doing – how safe they are?</p> <p>TP explained that the registers mentioned are checked daily by safeguarding team. Online register shows procedure and follow ups needed.</p> <p>KK questioned if some engagement with the teacher was better than nothing. That gets recorded on the register and is ok?</p> <p>TP replied yes, engagement spreadsheet shows if only engaging with one thing, or not at all etc and we can support that and encourage engagement with other subjects. If parents are struggling we can provide short steps, we can personalise approach as context and pressure is different in each family. We are fulfilling our legal obligations showing we know engagement levels and providing certain level/hours of work but we can tailor for some of our families and children.</p>	
<p>KK asked JD; how do our efforts compare to other schools?</p> <p>JD replied that she has not drilled down, overview from my point of view. But key points are knowing who your vulnerable pupils are and why, same for staff – duty of care to them. Is remote learning fit for purpose? Things are changing quickly at home – how do we respond to that appropriately? OFSTED will monitor the impact of remote learning. Lots of information from DfE – Babcock trying to pull all that together. You are tracking very carefully including how you respond to that. Just be mindful, very pressurised at home for very different reasons. We have to offer, and offer as much as we can but some homes may be getting too much learning. IEP, EHCP pupils – how do we not swamp them but still keep key bits moving for example.</p> <p>TP noted that the work is evolving all the time. Teachers are tweaking. We almost have a dual offer now - full curriculum offer is available for those children who can access it and then a reduced offer where teachers identify key elements to complete if home situation is different.</p> <p>JD asked if there was any opportunity for TA's/teachers to speak to children. Is there some capacity for that to happen via telephone and a screen like this? Provides that personal touch, let's children know we still care.</p> <p>CM responded; we have asked support staff to utilise their time. I've got comprehensive evidence of what has been allocated. Lots of year groups gone with allocating focus groups to TA's at home. Based on needs of children. 1 to 1 supporting in school happening at home too. Wide and varied options on offer. TP and I quality assured this week – checked Dojo for consistency in approach. Direct teaching and demonstrations online. Sending notes to parents who can't join. Providing at highest level and below that.</p> <p>JD replied it was good that the amount and quality of work was being monitored. Important point. Good that any face to face teaching involves parents because that will help support</p>	

<p>the home learning. Parents pick up key points. Parents are parents not teachers. Develop their confidence. Lots of comments about that's not how I learnt Maths from parents.</p> <p>CM explained that teachers were asked to upload a video of them reading their class novel every day. Initially lots said not confident about that but by the middle of the week everyone was engaging. Mr Jolliffe is reading treasure island dressed as a pirate – brilliant! Links and demonstrations are available across the board and about near enough everything, some videos show new ways and old ways of learning Maths for example. Links/videos are better than 'lives', can be played ten times if need be! Staff have really developed in their confidence this week. Developing skills. Dojo is amazing platform to record/show what we are doing, can't always do that with lives. Started to think about OFSTED. Documents being prepared around that to show consistence approach.</p> <p>JD commented that a template for schools was available, key questions to be OFSTED ready. Will send through.</p> <p>CM noted that they were currently using the one from the October briefing. Obviously prior to lockdown so yes please to that one as well. Also combining with Government advice. We send lots of individual emails to staff when we notice things on Dojo – shows we are monitoring but also positive feedback for staff. Shows amount of care. Will all be good evidence.</p>	
<p>JD commented that it all seems to be going well. Just a couple of questions – what does it look like from the shop floor? Good for CC to answer that and perhaps DF from a health and safety perspective.</p> <p>TP agreed, would be good to hear feedback on those points. CC would you like to go first?</p> <p>CC commented that it was difficult being online all the time, not the same as classroom obviously. Some issues as TA's, not a lot of 'playing time' with Dojo prior to using it. No training or guidance. No extra guidance on extra expectations. Working out as we go along. For example, marking expectations doesn't always get filtered down to TA's. Some restrictions with Dojo as a system – little bits that are tricky.</p> <p>CC provided an example of how she marked work and provided feedback.</p> <p>TP responded that was interesting feedback. When announcement was made some schools shut on that Tuesday, we didn't – just went straight in to being open for key workers and vulnerable children so there has been an element of learning as we go. Marking example is fine CC. Exactly what I have suggested.</p> <p>CM noted that guidance goes out to teachers and some of their role is about supporting and leading their TA. I can be mindful of also sending to TA's but is about filtering from the top down, being such a big school, it needs to happen that way. Go back to your teacher and say am I doing the right thing? Teachers are doing great job, evolving all the time but taking on board.</p> <p>JD noted that this meeting was both strategic and operational, great to have that in the same meeting. Is great, can see how they fit together for best practice. Refine provision by upskilling staff – maybe get snapshot from support staff on what has worked well and what needs supporting. Recognise what you have done, but we here for the long haul. Will be here until at least the Summer term. Develop and refine what you do. Get wider staff to identify what they need. Bitesize for staff like for children – we all learn!</p> <p>TP agreed, already sent out zoom crib sheet for example.</p>	

<p>JD commented that you almost need a menu of things, staff can just sign up to what is helpful to them.</p>	
<p>KK asked if we have stopped the flow of Covid amongst staff. Few positive cases recently.</p> <p>TP replied yes and no, changes on a daily basis. No new cases since email sent but who knows.</p> <p>JD commented that testing comes in to primary schools from Monday. Secondary schools have got good systems in place having been doing it for a while. Park School in Barnstaple good example. Lots to do, it's not the testing – it's the recording, disposing, more about logistics. Don't reinvent the wheel if someone is doing it well already.</p> <p>KK noted that Covid felt everywhere now compared to first lockdown. Wasn't really in South West and yet we all stayed at home and didn't go to work. Complete opposite this time and yet cases are worse and rising. Very strange approach – still here until Easter JD?</p> <p>JD replied; I don't know anything you don't know but I can read between the lines. Increased rates, significant increase in Cornwall, new variant etc, I get alert every time there is a case in school, confidential but I do get basic details. More and more alerts coming through. Nurseries and preschools – significant increase in Devon in these areas. Confirmation now that Nurseries can claim funding for up to six weeks for children not taking up their places. DCC committed to paying that in the short term.</p>	
<p>TP asked DF to comment on his views from health and safety point of view.</p> <p>DF replied that it has been difficult for him personally working at home. Stretched in office, sorting out free school meals and testing. Risk assessment is in place – will put that out to staff, open to comments. Only PS on site at the moment which is also stretching the sites team. Complying as well as we can be. Staggered lunchtimes, break times, 2 metres etc. Still working well.</p> <p>TP agreed, has worked well in past. Tightened since positive Covid test, really minimise contact now with rota.</p> <p>JD asked if staff wear masks or visors.</p> <p>TP replied; yes, in communal areas</p> <p>JD – what about for teaching?</p> <p>TP responded, currently optional.</p> <p>JD noted that visors were good for teaching. Can still see face. Better options out there now, visors with built in ear supports etc. Could just say must be worn in Nursery and Reception for example?</p> <p>TP explained that feedback is that being able to see the face is good but the visor causes the sound to get distorted. Not ideal for teaching phonics.</p> <p>JD asked if staff were actually wearing masks.</p> <p>TP replied yes, straight from car, until in bubble. Once in bubble and teaching; optional.</p>	

<p>DF added that this had improved since first positive case report. Staff have realised it's real.</p> <p>TP agreed, realisation that West Croft isn't immune. Really vigilant with mask wearing now.</p> <p>CM also added that DF has been on top of that. Asking us to have a word with some staff. Seen big step up in mask use.</p>	
<p>TP asked if there were any other questions.</p> <p>Recovered some questions from earlier as CL had joined the meeting later.</p> <p>CL asked how many families were needing support with technology.</p> <p>TP replied that 57 laptops had been ordered from the Government scheme. We do need more though. Siblings sharing for example. Going to order as much technology in as we can. Have also been approached by Bideford Bridge Trust. Following up on all possible options.</p> <p>Clerk tabled JE's questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How are staff being supported throughout lockdown? Is support being given regarding workload? <p>TP responded; workload is being supported through sharing good practices. Staff support in terms of best way to present home learning.</p> <p>CM added; lots of schools not doing a rota like we are. In my area lots of school running at 40% so all teachers in, makes it difficult to provide remote learning as well. We can be more flexible about that, everyone is very busy but supporting and working together.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Could I have an update as to how much in general the children are coping with online learning? <p>TP noted that hopefully that already been covered in initial conversation in terms of engagement spreadsheet etc.</p> <p>CL added, that although perhaps not for right now, but going forward is there any way that a Governor could be part of a lesson? No idea how these things are happening. No pressure just an idea for the future if this is a much longer thing.</p> <p>TP confirmed that live lessons weren't being taught at the moment. Links to videos so they can do that at home in their own time. Can make sure Governors are set up to be able to log in to Class Dojo. Can join some lessons when we get to that. Governor visit record can be completed if scrutinised a lesson.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Regarding the announcement of positive covid case within the school. Have any extra steps been taken to keep other staff members safe? <p>TP - covered earlier in chat. Rotas, masks etc</p> <p>Clerk noted following comment from JE: I would also, if you could, like you to convey to Tom and Charlene that I appreciate just how hard a situation this must be for all staff members and that in my opinion they are all doing a great job</p>	<p>Clerk to send Class Dojo link to Governors not already signed up.</p>

CL seconded JE's comment.

Meeting closed.