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Little Paxton Primary School Governing Body

Minutes for the extra-ordinary meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Monday 14th September 2020 at 6.30pm

The meeting was hosted on Zoom due to social distancing during the Coronavirus pandemic

Present:

Anna-Sofia Conway	Parent Governor	David Jones	Co-opted Governor
Katie Delgado	Staff Governor	Nickie Moore	Head Teacher
Neil Donoghue	Co-opted Governor	Christopher Muwanguzi	Parent Governor
Richard Fairbairn	Co-opted Governor	Paul Warmington (Chair)	Parent Governor
Tim Gawler	Parent Governor	Austin Willet	Parent Governor

In attendance:

Rebekah Jenkins	Associate Member
Gemma Pearce	Clerk
Alison Gatward	SBM

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed the Governing Body (GB) back from the summer holidays.

Apologies received and accepted from:

Victoria McAuley-Eccles	Co-opted Governor
Ellen Barrett	Co-opted Governor

2. Declaration of interests relating to this agenda

There were no new interests declared

3. HT update

Prior to the meeting the GB were sent copies of the School Recovery Development and Improvement Plan (RDIP) and the School Development plan (SDP).

The Head teacher (HT) informed the GB that since school re-opening she had been doing a lot of work going through and updating both documents based on the observations of the children back in school.

RDIP

The Central Leadership Team (CLT) had in particular been looking at the Wellbeing section of the RDIP as it quickly became clear that children were settling well back in to school and adjusting to the new systems quickly. They have shown an eagerness to get back to learning.

The HT informed that GB that only 3 children had not returned to school on the first day of term. After a week 35 children were off due to a heavy cold circulating and parents uncertain as to whether children should be in school.

School has put a texting system in place for parent to notify school if they are taking their child for a Covid test, and then to text the result. So far any children that have been tested have been negative.

Based on LA guidance on transparency the school have been notifying any 'bubbles' when a child has been taken for a test, and then the result. (POST MEETING NOTE: Subsequently the LA have changed guidance such that parents are only notified about a positive test, not all testing). The HT discussed that she had made the decision not to send emails regarding negative tests over the weekend as parents are already receiving a lot of information and a negative test requires no action from parents. The GB supported the HT in this decision.

The process of getting children in to and out of school has been going well following some changes to pick up in the first week. School can now get all children on and off site in 15 minutes. The HT thanked the CLT for their support in developing the system.

The bubble system is working well in school and children from different bubbles are not mixing.

The transition for the EY classes has worked well so far and school may consider this system for next year. SEN children are in as a small group in afternoons, this is a chance to meet them with 1-1 support as they have ECHP's. Group 1 came in for a week of mornings (25 children) and staff got to know them well and were able to establish rules and routines. Now doing same with group 2 before putting in to named classes. The children are settling well and staff have been very impressed.

The HT highlighted that the RDIP has a section on governance and the GB and she is including updates on the GB support.

SDP

This document was written just after OFSTED. Autumn 2020 is now Period 1 on the SDP. The HT informed the GB that it is likely that they will bring forward some of the knowledge assessments as they don't think the wellbeing focus needs to be as intense as first thought.

[QU: With regard child well-being - it's great that children appear to be resilient. What measures are in place to keep on top of this?](#)

It is on the agenda at every staff meeting going forwards to ensure school don't miss a child (or an adult) that need support

[QU: How are staff doing?](#) There is a real sense of team again. Things had been generally very positive last term but the last few weeks were hard. Everyone is really positive again now. In particular the teachers in the first few years of their careers have really stepped up to help out and volunteer to take on whatever necessary.

QU: How are the new staff? The HT commented that she was very happy with how new staff were settling in and the difference they were making already. She commented that they were building good relationships with existing staff who have supported them well.

QU: Has the first fire alarm test been done yet? Not yet but HT has looked at what other schools are doing. The HT was advised that fire safety is most important and whilst Covid requirements for social distancing should be adhered to where possible the most important thing is efficient evacuation of the building. The HT informed the GB that she had heard from another HT that propping the fire doors open, which is recommended for ventilation, voids the school insurance. The GB recommended that the school contact H&S at LA, fire officer and insurers just to confirm their plan is ok. It was commented that if there are changes to the school evacuation procedure to what the children are used to it is important to get the practice in place ASAP.

The GB complimented the CLT and thanked them for all the planning and hard work that went in to re-opening, sounds like it went very smoothly due to all their hard work.

4. Catering tender

An update on the catering tender from the School Business Manger (SBM) was circulated to the GB prior to meeting.

Three companies took part in an online interview with Nickie Moore, Alison Gatward, Richard Fairbairn and Austin Willett. Comments on the three companies were available in the update document.

The SBM summarised that there was a clear front-runner for all of the interview panel – Aspens – and with the GB support she would propose to offer the contract to them. The governors who were on the panel supported the SBM's comments and added that they felt that Aspens were a very open company and that the school would be able to have constructive conversations with them should there be any issues.

QU: Has the SBM spoken to anyone that other schools that use them? Have had some feedback from Brampton which was largely positive. They had a few issues at first as didn't get the numbers at first but they overcame this and they will likely re-new their contract.

QU: Is there anything that is going to place more responsibility on school to maintain equipment? With current caterers contract put onus on school to replace equipment if a possible. Aspens Cap maintenance at £1000 a year and have offered to help work through maintenance. They are offering an upfront investment in school equipment. The company are aware of age of kitchen and want to partner to help manage the maintenance of the kitchen.

QU: Is depreciation of kitchen equipment considered in the school budget? There is a budget line for maintenance but have never built up a pot for kitchen.

QU: Who will do the admin for school lunches? There will have an on-line ordering system that the caterers have. By ordering the meal it has to be paid for so only way of being any debt will be if a child forgets packed lunch. So will mostly take the pressure off the office.

RESOLUTION: The GB support awarding the contract to Aspens – on provision that satisfactory terms are agreed at the next stage.

The SBM advised the GB that there is a standard ESPO contract but no legal advice offered to look at contract. She asked if any of ther Governors have any contacts that could look at the contract. The GB suggested that the SBM look to see if there is a LA legal team to get advice. ASC, CM and PW also offered to try and identify if there is anyone who can help amongst their networks.

5. Site management update

The HT told the GB that she is concerned about the impact Covid is having on the school maintenance. For example school are aware that the day after this meeting 3 cleaners will be off. School is meant to be doing enhanced cleaning but how can this be managed? The site is so big that the site-manager role is difficult for one person, especially when a lot of his time is currently spent cleaning. The HT asked that the GB need to consider the role of the site-manager and that this would be a useful task for this year.

The GB felt that is for the school to decide what they want and need operationally from the site manager and then they will support with this.

QU: Have you thought about trying to get an apprentice site-manager? This is one thing that is being considered but some reservations from HT.

QU: With cleaners off is there a risk of not keeping school clean enough? All touch points, tables, toilets etc are being cleaned regularly throughout the day by teachers and TA. Covid disinfection will continue but things like hoovering may get missed.

QU: What do the cleaning company say? EasyKleen contract the cleaners – they have nobody available. School should be refunded and AG is on top of this.

QU: Is this a common problem? It is fairly common not to get supply cleaners. Normally the cleaners that the school have cover each other.

QU: Are school happy with current cleaning company? This is not something that has been discussed in detail by CLT but general feeling is probably not. The SBM told the GB that the contract is due for renewal within this school year and so this will be discussed in order to decide whether to give them notice

It was agreed that the CLT should decide on their priorities for the Site Manager role and consider their preference on cleaning and the renewal of the cleaning contract and bring their recommendations to a future meeting for governors to consider. This would likely be a Resources Committee meeting and the Chair and HT agreed to look at the best timing for this.

6. AOB

The HT informed the GB that she has to make a decision on the Hilltops residential visit for Y6 and notify parents. The GB supported the HT that in the current situation with Covid school should prepare parents that it will not go ahead.

The Chair notified the GB that EB had handed in her resignation from the GB due to increase in her workload, meaning she did not feel she could commit the time necessary to the GB any longer. PW and the GB noted their thanks to EB for her 5 years of support of the school.

The governors thanked the CLT again for all their hard work on preparing the school for re-opening. Governors with children in school commented that there was a real happiness and positivity amongst the children.

The meeting closed at 7.34pm