

FOWLMERE PRIMARY SCHOOL

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Wednesday 17 June 2020
7.30pm in School

Present:

Philip Atkin (PA), Head Teacher
Sarah Burge (SB), Chair
Bruce Gilliam (BG)
Jo Grazebrook (JG) (until 8.20pm)
Clare Hobro (CH)
Ashley Meggitt (AM)
Andrew Page (AP)
Nico Schonken (NS)
Hayley Woods (HW)

In Attendance:

Lisa White (LW) (Camclerk)
Lynsey Perkins (LP) (Associate Member)

1. Apologies for absence

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.30pm and thanked everyone for joining the meeting.

The Chair explained that this Extraordinary General Meeting was called so that governors could receive an update on the wider opening of the school.

Apologies were received and accepted from Gill Heathcote.

2. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to the agenda.

3. Head Teacher's Update on Wider opening of Fowlmere Primary School

The Chair passed the meeting to PA who advised that the wider opening of the school has gone well over the last one and a half weeks. PA and LP then advised the following:

- Reception children in every day, all day except for Friday afternoons when the school closes for Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time;
- 11 children out of a possible 14 are in setting;
- Children have settled well and were very happy to see each other;
- Whilst it is not always possible to ensure the children adhere to the social distancing requirements, children have taken on board specific routines;
- Teaching has started with Phonics and Maths and any gaps in children's learning are starting to be filled;
- Cleaning regime takes over an hour every day and a significant amount of disinfectant has been used already, so this is an additional challenge staff have to face;

Signed



Date

12/7/2020

A governor asked:

Question:

Were there any reception children in the childcare group before and if so, have they now moved to Reception bubble?

Answer:

Yes. They are now in my bubble.

- 10 parents out of 14 in Year 1 wanted their children to return to school. Three of those pupils are however in the key worker / childcare group as they need After School Club provision;
- Year 1 are in school all week but for half days. This was partly due to Teaching Assistant cover but also ensuring there was sufficient time to provide home learning for the Year 2 children at home. In addition, the Year 1 teacher is newly qualified and as the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are unable to supervise and offer support, the reduced hours took this into account;
- Children are enjoying being back in school and things are going well;

A governor asked if the SLT were content with the provision as is and PA suggested and it was agreed that options for expanding the school's provision should be discussed later in the meeting.

- There are 14 pupils in the key worker group (Childcare 1), with varying numbers of children attending on any one day. This number ranges from 9 to 12 children across the week;
- This group is taught by Jo Grazebrook who advised governors that despite a couple of the Year 1 children struggling initially, things are also going well.
- JG advised however that it is a challenge to teach across a range of year groups;

A governor asked:

Question:

Is this the group who goes to After School Club?

Answer:

Yes. They are the ones who are getting what is close to a normal day's provision.

- The second key worker group has 10 children who are in setting from Monday to Thursday;
- This group is not as full and is usually between 2 and 5 pupils per day;
- The teacher for this group is also providing Home Learning for Years 3 to 6 which is one of the reasons the group runs until Thursday only;
- It is fortunate that some families were able to accommodate the shorter week.

A governor asked:

Question:

Have you therefore got about half of the pupils in setting then?

Answer:

We created 52 spaces but some of our childcare group are not in setting so we are not quite at 50%.

PA then stated that it feels like the balance in school is right. Staff are managing the risk but also ensuring children are happy and comfortable in school. PA advised that he was congratulated by the grounds maintenance contractor who said he has seen lots of schools and is impressed with what Fowlmere has done to get children back to school without making it look like a unwelcoming.

PA then advised that the SLT have also done a formal review of where we are with staff and reviewed the Risk Assessment.

Signed  Date 12/7/2020

Page 2 of 6

PA explained that staff were asked one at a time to talk about their experience and asked there was anything additional they needed or whether they had identified any areas for improvement. Following this, it was noted that only minor adjustments were made to the Risk Assessment.

PA then referred governors to the latest version of this document which was shared prior to the meeting and explained that it includes some minor updates including information regarding PE.

PA then explained that unfortunately, recent guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) with regards the wider re-opening of schools is underwhelming and just talks of greater flexibility going forward.

PA further explained that the guidance states that if schools still have capacity and are meeting the provision of places in school for the key worker and vulnerable children groups, and the Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 target groups, they are now able to invite additional year groups.

PA advised that it is basically up to schools to choose but that they will not be allowed to spend additional money in order to do this, and are therefore unable to employ more staff. PA also advised that it is obviously not possible to build more classrooms, plus schools have been explicitly told that they are unable to use community spaces such as village halls (guidance from the DfE) as these are currently closed and therefore not available for schools to expand their provision.

PA then stated that the DfE did say that schools could use secondary school sites if they have space, but that this conflicts with secondary school guidance where it says that under no circumstances can primary pupils be on site.

PA then advised that there are a couple of options that can be explored as follows:

- i. Capacity to extend the provision for Year 1 children to 2 – 2.30pm.
This was considered before the new guidance was received, but as mentioned above, the Year 1 class teacher is a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) and the SLT were concerned over workload for this teacher.

In addition, Year 2 home learning would then have to be passed to the teacher who is currently providing home learning for the year groups not in school, which will also mean an increase in workload.

It was noted that there is currently no pressure from Year 1 parents to increase the provision.

It was also noted that the parents on the Governing Body agreed and that their preference would be for Year 6 pupils to return to setting if possible.

PA stated that unfortunately, it is currently not a viable option for the Year 6 pupils to return to school, but that the SLT are keenly aware of the issues for this year group and explained that if the numbers allowed, the school would invite these pupils back to school.

A governor asked:

Question:

How many pupils are there in Year 6 and how many of those are in the childcare group? If you removed those from the childcare group, do you have enough spaces?

Signed  Date 12/7/2020

Answer:

There are 14 Year 6 pupils and two of them are in the childcare group. We would still not have sufficient spaces available.

We are working on plans for this year group, especially in relation to transition to secondary school.

We are arranging a virtual residential trip for them; we have found a play that can be rewritten to enable the children to do via Zoom.

We have also considered whether it is possible to have this year group in school during the last week of term and hopefully there will be some flexibility in the guidance by this point.

We are also discussing the possibility of holding a socially distanced picnic on the Butts. The only issue with this is that we will need to have some backup dates in case of poor weather.

We have also arranged for the transition teachers from local secondary schools to do a Zoom meeting with those pupils transferring to these schools as we have identified pupils' anxieties about their transition to the next school.

Governors asked:

Question:

This term, these pupils would usually be completing their Sex and Relationships Education (SRE), is there a way to ensure this still happens?

Answer:

Some parents have expressed concern on this and we have therefore lent those families some materials to deal with this. I do not think it would be appropriate for staff to have to teach this subject in any other way than in a classroom as that in itself is challenging.

Question:

If it has not already been communicated to parents that this is an option, can we do so?

Answer:

Yes.

Question:

You mentioned that the vulnerable children are not accessing the key worker group, what are we doing to keep in contact with them?

Answer:

We are in contact with these pupils through the Child in Need meetings that are held virtually with the Social Worker, but we are not getting those children in setting as their parents are choosing not to send them.

In these cases, the children are not at significant risk by being at home although it is not an ideal situation. We do not have any children on Child Protection plans. They are children in need rather than children at risk.

Question:

If parents are not choosing to take these places, does this mean there are spaces?

Answer:

There are definitely 5 children not taking up their allocated place.

Signed



Date

12/7/2020

This is my third option to explore and I have asked teachers to identify 2, 3 or 4 children from their class who they are particularly concerned that they are not accessing learning at home or concerned about their mental health. The SLT are considering using the available key worker / vulnerable spaces to have those children in setting.

In addition, our childcare 2 group could take in extra children. At this point, we would be advising families that if they have not already taken the place allocated to them, the place has been allocated elsewhere.

A governor asked:

Question:

Would we need to give notice if we decide to do this?

Answer:

Yes, but only a couple of days, as once we have identified the most needy children who are not already in setting, we will want to have them in school as soon as possible.

It was noted that the children that staff have identified are not necessarily the children that you expect to be struggling and are from a cross section of all families.

Governors considered whether parents were opting not to send their children to school as they were concerned about the risk of contracting the virus. PA advised that some updated data from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Governor Services shows that there have only been 3 confirmed cases since 1 June in all of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. In addition, data from South Cambridgeshire shows only 4 positive tests in the last week.

PA explained that it is still early to tell if schools have had an impact on the data, but in the above context, that level of cases is negligible.

PA also explained that it is difficult to get the correct balance with some families concerned about the safety of sending their children back to school, but then there are also children who could benefit from being in school.

A governor asked:

Question:

Are staff aware of how they can get tested?

Answer:

Yes.

It was noted that governors wished to note how successful the wider opening of the school has been and thanked everyone involved.

4. Any other business

It was noted that there were two items of other business as follows:

- a) Resignation of Gill Heathcote and

The Chair explained that Gill Heathcote will be resigning from her role as Co-opted Governor at the end of the summer term.

- b) Amendment to previous proposal to provide a straight Reception class from September 2020.

PA advised that at the last FGB meeting, governors approved a change in class structure for the 2020/21 academic year to a straight Reception class based on the number of Reception places offered for September.

Signed  Date 12/1/2020

PA then explained that within a week of that meeting, the school received applications for a new Year 1 and a new Year Two pupil starting in September. PA advised that this will mean Class 2 will therefore be at 30 pupils, and therefore, it will not be possible to offer a straight Reception class.

PA referred governors to the school's policy on this and explained that based on these new applications, the structure will need to be amended to a mixed Reception / Year 1 class (Class 1) and a mixed Year 1 / Year 2 class (Class 2) from September.

PA explained that this will mean the number of pupils will be 24 and 22 in Class 1 and Class 2 respectively.

Governors asked:

Question:

Will the total number of pupils on roll be more than 100 for the next academic year?

Answer:

It should be, but I am aware of one pupil who will be leaving to go to the private sector and one pupil on roll who does not live in the area, so may also leave.

Question:

Are you comfortable with how the Reception group has been split?

Answer:

Yes. We have considered how we have split the group carefully and from a morally and ethically and policy perspective, it works well.

Question:

Will parents be informed when they receive the end of year reports?

Answer:

That is what the policy says, but I will probably inform them before then.

It was noted that JG left the meeting at 8.20pm.

Finally, a governor remarked how pleased they were with the positive article that the Head Teacher wrote for the Fowlmere and Thriplow News.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Signed  Date 12/7/2020