



Headteacher
Mr N Sharp

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Minutes of Arnside National C of E School
Virtual Devolved Governing Board Meeting (VGB)
held on Tuesday 13 October 2020 at 4.00pm

Key: highlighted areas in yellow = action point highlighted areas in blue = impact measure highlighted areas in green = question

This is the information required by governors under the current COVID19 lockdown. The government have stated that governors' statutory responsibilities are not altered or relaxed during the current situation. A duty to ensure that the strategic overview of school is managed lies with the governing board of Arnside National CE School.

It should be possible for those governors not on the devolved board to reply by email to the minutes with either an 'I endorse these decisions entirely' or 'I endorse these decisions except for the following reservations'. If sufficient reservations were expressed, then it will be possible to review a decision.

Present: Mr David Adair, Mrs Helen Chaffey, Mr Steven Kershaw Chair, The Revd Andrew Norman
Mr Nick Sharp Headteacher

In attendance: Mrs Sue Glendinning Clerk to the Governing Board

VGBM 65/20 Welcome

Mr Kershaw welcomed the devolved governing board to the meeting.

VGBM 66/20 To receive apologies for absence

No apologies were received, and the meeting was declared quorate, with all governors' present.

VGBM 67/20 Declaration of conflict of interest in agenda items

Mr Sharp and Mr Adair declared an interest in relation to their wives being staff members.
Nil else declared.

VGBM 68/20 Approve minutes previous meeting

The minutes from 27 August were agreed to be an accurate and true record of the meeting, proposed by Mr Adair, seconded by Mr Kershaw.

VGBM 69/20 Action points

VGBM 59/20: Risk assessments to be signed off. **Action completed by Mr Kershaw.**

VGBM 62/20: The devolved board to continue until October 2020, to enable the smooth re-opening of school to occur, with another meeting scheduled to discuss the risk assessment updates.

The governing board will be asked to meet in November and normal business will resume in January 2021. This meeting may be face to face or dependent upon the Covid situation, may be virtually arranged. Government guidance will dictate future arrangements.

Essential governance matters

VGBM 70/20 Headteachers report

Mr Sharp informed the board of staff absences due to staff having to self-isolate due to contact with Covid19 carriers. This included himself and Mrs Sharp. All procedures were implemented, with the relevant authorities informed and protocols followed. No other cases are known.

The LA are encouraging schools to inform parents if it is known that a child is going for a test.

Authorised by Chair *Steven Kershaw*

Date 12 November 2020

The board advised against this action, as it was felt that this would not be beneficial to any party and would create a ripple of discontent throughout the community. It was agreed that parents should only be informed if there is a positive case confirmed in school.

Concern was expressed that in a small community such as Arnside, governors had not been informed about the head's absence, yet had heard about it on the grapevine.

The board were informed that it had not been possible to send an email via ScholarPack to governors, which is the communication portal being used. However, assurances were given that all protocols were followed, the Chair was aware, and steps have been taken to set up an additional separate mailing list on ScholarPack for governors. Lessons have been learnt from the process.

It was noted from the headteachers report that reviews are going ahead, with the:

- 1-1 peer review process imminent,
- the Diocesan review with Charlotte Tudway scheduled for October
- the SRMA review with Emma Batts from the ESFA to be held to discuss the budget submitted for the next academic year.

Any future Ofsted inspections will be carried out over a 1-day period with the headteacher and staff, with no governor involvement.

The board have received Rebecca Kennington's resignation, citing increased personal priorities for her own business, which precludes any free time for governance. This leaves a vacancy for the safeguarding governors' role, which needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Various suggestions were discussed, and it was agreed that the matter be put to the full board for their consideration.

Action point:

Agenda item at board meeting in November.

The matter was also raised that concern over governor lack of involvement has been made, in relation to decision making during lockdown and that some governors are feeling left out of the loop.

Comment was made that in these unprecedented times school have managed extremely well to keep going along with the support of the devolved board; the decision to move to a devolved board was approved by all. It is unfortunate that some feel they are missing out; however, it is hoped to rectify this by meeting as a full board once again in November and going on from there.

Reassurance will be offered at the next meeting that all is in order.

The board meeting will be held in one of two ways on 11 November 2020:

- 1) **Socially distanced in the school hall OR**
- 2) **Virtual meeting using Microsoft Teams, with meeting protocol to be followed by those participating.**
 - **All governors to ensure they are in a quiet area, away from family members, as the meeting remains confidential, as it would as if held in school.**
 - **Headphones or earbuds to be worn (if possible, so that only the governor can hear the content of the meeting)**
 - **All governor to use the "mute" button during agenda items, and to indicate the wish to speak using the hands icon, which will inform the Chair someone wishes to speak.**

Q: Does Mr Adair need to continue carrying out the bank reconciliations, if Saint & Co are carrying out the audit?

A: Yes, this is still a requirement, so an arrangement will need to be made to meet with Mrs Inchmore to carry this out.

Mr Sharp informed the board that the library is almost completed. New white boards have been ordered and will be installed during half term in all classrooms. Computers are also to be replaced.

Staff requested in the staff wellbeing questionnaire carried out on 7 October 2020, that a new hot water boiler be installed to alleviate the wait currently experienced due to the Covid staffing arrangements, as the current system is unable to meet demand.

Staff break times are currently split, which means that staff in the second shift don't have any hot water, as the first shift have used it and the kettle has not had time to replenish supply as it is not large enough.

Mrs Smith from the New Barns Caravan Park has offered to donate a boiler. This offer is being followed up.

Staff morale is being watched, as staff are unable to use the staff room due to Covid risk assessments and must remain in their bubble. They are, therefore, unable to mix with their colleagues, or let off steam (which they can't do at home either). This is creating tension, which is being monitored.

School church has resumed, albeit in a strange fashion; but it is encouraging to see that it has been set up to accommodate the bubble structure over the past 3 weeks. Father Andrew has been managing this arrangement and after half term Mr Kershaw will be able to assist.

Mr Sharp was thanked for his extensive heads report.

VGBM 71/20 Full opening risk assessment update

The risk assessment is a working document, which is constantly being updated as changes are made, or government directives advise.

The recent HSE spot check carried out in school demonstrated that the document has been shared with staff as part of the safeguarding process. The staff meeting minutes demonstrated this to be the case.

Governing board minutes also demonstrated that the governors have been on board throughout the process and approved the various tweaking's to the risk assessments:

- Lunchtime separate arrangements
- Purchase of additional serving trays
- Pupils seated face front
- Use of classrooms to serve lunch in to reduce numbers using the school hall
- Staggered start initially proposed, negated due to these arrangements
- The arrangements remind staff of the main hot spots in school, and that no cross over of bubbles is permitted.

VGBM 72/20 Finance update

Mr Sharp reported that school are in a better financial position than at first thought.

The 3-year prediction shows that school is in a better position, and the budget can be balanced due to the additional 11 pupils who started in September 2020.

This has lifted school out of the red into the black over the next two years.

4 of these pupils brought an additional sum through pupil premium funding.

a) Class structure

Q: Are we going ahead with the structure as it stands, or will there be another review?

A: There are a few issues with Nursery, and they may amalgamate with Year 1. At the moment it is uncertain what the best option will be. The plan is to stick with the structure for this coming year and review for 2021-22.

A review of Arnies and its continuation is needed as numbers are low, due to families not accessing the service. Numbers are to be reviewed in December with Mrs Evans, and a decision made then. There are currently 2 members of staff paid to look after 4 children; therefore, another option needs to be considered:

- Drop to a 4-day week
- Reduce the time to run to 5.00pm from 5.30pm, thereby saving 2 hours a day in staff time
- It is not possible to reduce to one member of staff for safeguarding requirements
- Send a message to parents after half term informing them numbers are low, "Use it or lose it"

Authorised by Chair *Steven Kershaw*

Date 12 November 2020

The structure of classes received one parental complaint regarding the placement of a child in a particular year group. The matter was dealt with at the end of the summer term, which school believed to be resolved: however, the matter was raised again at the start of the autumn term. Mr Kershaw dealt with the matter and responded to the parent following procedure. Unfortunately, the correct procedure was not followed by the parent who raised their complaint through a governor.

Q: Has the governor been spoken to about the correct process?

A: Yes, the clerk replied to both the parent and the governor informing them of the correct procedure to follow.

The board agreed that a review of how school carry out a split class process will be held, and will consider the following areas:

- Age appropriate division
- Abilities
- Combination of two areas mentioned above
- At all times the staff professional judgment will be utilised during the process, based on staff knowledge of pupils

The consultation process will involve, staff, parents and governors and will be carried out after half term. The board agreed that a class will not be split using a pupil friendship/group dynamics basis.

Action point:

- The complaints procedure to be sent out to parents again, and governors to be reminded of the correct process at the next meeting.
- A review of the split class process consultation to be carried out with staff, parents, & governors.

b) Governor business interest audit

The relevant business interest audit forms required by the auditor have been completed and sent off the Saint & Co.

c) Academy finance handbook

The updated version will be sent to all governors for their information.

VGBM 73/20 Policies for approval

- a) Child Protection & safeguarding policy
 - b) Whole school behaviour policy with addendum
 - c) Whole school behaviour policy
- } approved

Proposed by Mr Adair, seconded by Revd Norman.

VGBM 74/20 Items deemed confidential

Under the heads report there were items relating to pupils and staff that were deemed confidential. These have been minuted separately.

VGBM 75/20 Date of next meeting Thursday 12 November 2020 at 5.00pm

The meeting will open at 4.45pm to sort out any glitches prior to the meeting starting at 5.00pm, if a virtual meeting is to be held.

Governors were thanked for their attendance and involvement in the meeting.

Meeting closed at 5.30pm