

**BUCKTON VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY GOVERNING BOARD MEETING/COVID-19 OVERSIGHT PANEL HELD VIRTUALLY ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**PRESENT: Mr Nick Whitbread Parent – in the Chair**

**Mrs Sarah Blake Staff**

**Mrs Jackie Brook Co-opted**

**Mr Arron Leech Co-opted**

**Ms Jenny Ross Parent**

**Ms Taf Sharif Authority**

**Mrs Deborah Brown Headteacher**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Rachel Lees Clerk to the Governing Board**

Due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic the meeting had been arranged virtually by Mrs Cox, School Business Manager, via Microsoft Teams.

**PROCEDURAL**

**1 Welcome and Confidentiality Reminder**

The Chair welcomed governors to the virtual meeting and reminded them of the confidential nature of the discussions taking place.

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from the following governors:

* Simon Barry, Parent governor
* John Cesarz, Co-opted governor
* Matt Hartley, Parent governor

RESOLVED: To consent to the absence of the above governors.

1.2 Declaration of Pecuniary/Business/Personal/Conflict of Interest

Governors completed the updated Register of Pecuniary/Business/Personal/Conflict of Interest form which was circulated by the Clerk prior to the meeting. The signed forms would be retained by the school. Governors present at the meeting confirmed they had no pecuniary or personal interest in the items on the agenda, save for the declarations below.

RESOLVED: That the following declaration of pecuniary/personal interest are noted:

* Mr Simon Barry - Parent
* Mrs Sarah Blake - Teacher
* Mr Matt Hartley - Parent
* Mr Arron Leech – Director of Party Palace Enterprise Ltd
* Mrs Jenny Ross - Parent
* Ms Taf Sharif - Councillor TMBC and Director/Trustee of Homestart
* Mr Nick Whitbread - Parent

**2 Governing Board Membership**

2.1 Forthcoming end/s of term/s of office

The term of office for Mr Hartley, Parent governor, would expire on 29 November 2020. However, he agreed that he would be prepared to stand for a further term of office. The School Business Manager (SBM) would arrange the parent governor election process.

RESOLVED: That the School Business Manager will arrange the parent governor election process

2.2 Appointment of Co-opted Governor

Governors were aware that the Headteacher had spoken to Mr Wayne Williams who was keen to join the Governing Board as Co-opted governor. He would need to declare a pecuniary interest because he was providing sport to children at lunchtime and would not sit on the Finance and Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED: To appoint Wayne Williams as Co-opted governor from 16 September 2020 to

15 September 2024

*(Clerk to act as Chair for item 3)*

**3 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair**

3.1 Appointment of Chair

Mr Nick Whitbread was nominated as Chair of the Governing Board until the autumn term meeting 2021. Votes were taken as a show of hands and the term of office was agreed as one year.

RESOLVED: To appoint Nick Whitbread as Chair of the Governing Board until autumn term 2021

3.2 Appointment of Vice Chair

Mr Matt Hartley was nominated as Vice Chair of the Governing Board until the autumn term meeting 2021. Votes were taken as a show of hands and the term of office was agreed as one year.

RESOLVED: To appoint Matt Hartley as Vice Chair of the Governing Board until autumn term 2021

*Mr Whitbread in the Chair*

**4 Minutes of the summer term meetings**

4.1 Confirmation of minutes of the Extraordinary Governing Board meeting held on 8 July 2020

RESOLVED: To confirm that the minutes of the virtual summer term Extraordinary Governing

Board meeting held on 8 July 2020 are a true and correct record

The Chair referred governors to the table on page 5 of the minutes and Chair confirmed that all items had been dealt with or were included on the agenda.

4.2 Finance, Personnel and Premises Committee – 6 May 2020

Governors received the minutes and had no further questions.

4.3 Covid-19 Oversight Panel – 22 July 2020

Governors received the minutes and had no further questions. However, an amendment was requested to question 4, page 2. The Clerk would amend the minutes and email the document to governors.

**5 Governing Board Items**

5.1 Covid-19 Oversight Panel – update

An update was provided within the Headteacher’s Report at minute 7 below.

5.2 Policy Approval

5.2.1 Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact Policy

5.2.2 Curriculum Intent Statement

5.2.3 Teaching and Learning Statement

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| Q | Do the curriculum policies need to be adapted regarding not allowing assemblies? |
| A | We are not having assemblies in the hall. We need the children to settle back in but there are plans to have virtual assemblies. We hope to start them after the October half term at the latest – the children have asked for them. |
| Q | It would be a good way to address the Covid-19 situation as a whole. |
| Q | We have forest school on the Curriculum Policy. It is coming back? |
| A | The issue is that Mrs Thompson is in a bubble. |
| A | The policy was not revised because of Covid, Forest school has stopped because there would be a problem running it with the bubbles and staggered starts at lunchtimes. Y3/4 staff start and end at a different time to Y5/6. |

RESOLVED: To approve the Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact Policy; Curriculum

Intent Statement and Teaching and Learning Statement

**6 Confirmation of Governing Board and Committee meeting dates**

The Chair reminded governors that all were invited to attend any Panel or Committee meeting.

RESOLVED: To confirm the dates of the autumn term Governing Board and Committee meetings:

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| Covid-19 Oversight Panel | Tuesday 29 September 2020 at 4:00 pm |
| Curriculum and Standards Committee | Wednesday 11 November 2020 at 5:00 pm |
| Finance, Personnel and Premises Committee | Monday 23 November 2020 at 9:00 am |
| Governing Board | Tuesday 8 December 2020 at 5:00 pm |

The Pay Committee would meet before 31 October and the Headteacher’s Performance Management Committee would meet before 31 December 2020.

**SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND STANDARDS**

**7 Headteacher’s Report**

The Headteacher’s Report was circulated to governors by email on 10 July 2020 and contained information on the current school situation including:

7.1 Monitoring of Provision (vulnerable children/EHCPs/key workers’ children)

The Headteacher was concerned as school had prepared paperwork to submit to the LA for at least four children who needed EHCPs. An EHCP suggested that the child had very specific SEND needs and usually meant that the child would need one to one support from a member of staff. The Headteacher had already contacted the LA to share her concerns about the cost school would incur with additional EHCPs. Governors were aware that school was in financial difficulty and heading towards a deficit budget and finding additional funding would cause significant problems. The Headteacher confirmed that she was receiving some support from the LA. See minute 7.8 below.

7.2 Safeguarding/Wellbeing including monitoring the wellbeing and welfare of pupils, staff and

stakeholders

The Headteacher and staff governor confirmed that Buckton Vale was still offering a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff were working very hard to ensure that the broad and balanced curriculum was available but things had to be slowed down a little so staff could establish what children could do. Children were still having books to inspire reading and writing and Read Write continued. White Rose maths was well received in lockdown and this had continued because children were familiar with it and it would be used again in the event of another lockdown. School had continued with the music curriculum with Nicola Oldham now taking the lead after Jacky Brand’s retirement, although children could not sing. Staff had been very pro-active. Spanish lessons started in Year 5 and 6 delivered by our Partnership teacher.

PE continued and staff were trying to teach outdoors where possible. Humanities had been taken over by Amy Whittaker who was working closely with staff to look at geographical skills i.e. Y3/4 orienteering which linked to the geography curriculum.

Staff were doing a lot of PHSE work because the wellbeing of the children was a major concern. The recent INSET session focused on PERMA training and staff were doing a lot of wellbeing and breathing techniques with the children. The Friends of Buckton Vale had purchased journals for children in Year 1-6. These would begin after October half-term.

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| Q | When will governors receive data? |
| A | We updated data in March following lockdown and uploaded that to Educater. The trainer will come into school on 17 September to see what we can do next. We have discussed data as a SLT and we will do assessments in October. We will assess the whole school and use the end of last year’s assessment so staff can identify gaps. This could then be analysed for governors. |
| Q | Parents have not had the chance to talk to teachers for some time. Will there be some type of distanced parents’ evening? |
| A | Parents will have had information about where their children are at in academic terms in March. We do not feel as a staffing team that it was fair to give a child a judgement if there has been too much lost learning. |
| A | We were encouraged not to share data because it is not validated. We will schedule virtual parents’ evenings after half term. We have discussed this as an SLT and proposed eight parents per night over a period of four weeks. |
| Q | Will data be shared at the Curriculum and Standards Committee meeting in November? |
| A | We make predictions for Y6 normally but it would be slower this year although we are still doing it. We do not know whether tests will go ahead. We are telling the children it is business as usual and we are preparing them for secondary education. |
| Q | The Governing Board’s role continues in terms of overseeing accountability. Covid-19 has changed things but we need to continue to make sure we are on track. |
| A | Assessment week is 5 October. Teachers will collate information to share on 11 November. |

7.3 Curriculum and School Day changes

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| Q | Are there any questions about changes in the school day? |
| A | We have different times for different year groups. Every year group has extra time not less, ie there is more time learning. |
| Q | Will there be any after school clubs? |
| A | No, we considered it but as we have bubbles we cannot mix them so any after school club would have been for very specific bubbles on certain days of the week. There would be difficulties bring in PE kit. We discussed this with the SLT on 14 September. |
| Q | Are the children coming in full uniform? |
| A | We can gone for full school uniform but children come in wearing their PE kit on the days they are doing PE. |

7.4 Our online learning offer

The Headteacher confirmed that all schools were preparing for potential further lockdown, whether a bubble or the full school. A lot of Tameside schools had been affected by bubble closures – 91 as at 15 September. Buckton Vale’s bubbles were in double year groups (Y5/6, Y3/4, Y1/2+Reception). That would affect school significantly if there was a confirmed case but the Headteacher would be guided by Public Health England (PHE). The Headteacher would have to answer a specific number of questions by PHE. School was preparing an online learning offer using the Dojo system which children enjoyed. Eventually, once up and running, parents would get to see their Dojo points during the day and teachers would be in a position to share learning on that platform. The office staff and IT Manager were working to get it ready and send information to parents.

7.5 GDPR Update and Termly report from the Data Protection Officer/details of any breaches of

the General Data Protection Regulations

The Headteacher was in the process of changing Data Protection Officer prior to Covid-19 as she felt that the DPO was not providing value for money. The current DPO had emailed a report which would be shared with the Governing Board. The School Business Managers had already met with another DPO with a good reputation.

7.6 COVID 19 issues

See above.

7.7 The budget – what we need to do next

See above.

7.8 SEND – update/information

The Headteacher had requested an external company, Thrive Education, to support the Headteacher during the Covid-19 crisis. The company would complete a full review of SEND at Buckton Vale, including forthcoming challenges, to give an external view and make recommendations. Her report would be shared with the Governing Board.

There were some safeguarding issues linked to SEND as school had a significant number of families who required some element of external support (such as Families Together, SEND) and some families would move to CIN (Child in Need) or CP (Child Protection). School was experiencing a spike in cases to a point where it was likely that there would be an increasing number of children on the CP register. The Headteacher expected that it was a Tameside, if not national, issue.

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| Q | I understand that part of the EHCP process is proving that the school has already spent a certain amount on each child in order to qualify for the additional funding they can access once an EHCP has been approved. Whereas the LA used to allocate funding when children were referred as having SEND, the LA now awards funding in advance on a prediction of numbers of pupils with SEND and that part of the budget is ring-fenced for SEND so I wondered how the EHCP itself caused an added cost to the school. |
| A | We have to fill in documentation which alerts the LA to specific need. That could be full time support which would be an additional cost. |
| Q | Do you need to prove how you spend the money? |
| A | We fill in a provision map as part of our evidence for an EHCP which explains what we have spent money on already and what we will spend money on going forward which is the total cost to alert the LA as to how much more money we need to spend. The LA then decides how much money they will offer us if they agree with the EHP but if that does not fit the entire cost and school has to absorb some. The problem is that we have a falling role: we are 18 children short in this year’s cohort which equates to around £60,000; last year we had 37 children which was a loss of eight which equates to £25,000; and the previous year we had 39 which is six short which is £20,000. This means a significant loss of £105,000. I have spoken to the LA about my concerns and they are working with me. I also alerted the LA to the 45 PAN because we are already disadvantaged. If we have 30 children we have one full time teacher but with just fifteen more children we still have to provide another full time teacher and that is a problem even when we have a full PAN of 45. The LA needs to look at that and I have shared my views with Tim Bowman. My personal belief is that we are being unfairly disadvantaged, coupled with the SEND crisis and we do not seem to get as much money for disadvantaged families.  We need to have a review of disadvantaged families: we have Millbrook and Micklehurst nearby and, looking at the context of Buckton Vale, we are in the same local area. Although we have a significant number of families who live in privately owned accommodation. The majority of our families are working and the money is in the property, not on the table. Many of our families are on the breadline. Covid-19 has helped those issues rise to the top. |
| Q | We are experiencing a very difficult set of circumstances. Financially it is going to cause us some major problems and the drop in numbers is a far bigger concern. We were concerned about this a few years ago. What specific support is the LA going to provide? When we get a class over 30, the legislation provided that we have to have one teacher but could we have 60 children and two teachers rather than 45 children? Why are we limited to 45? |
| A | Tim Bowman has agreed there is some concern about the Buckton Vale situation. At the moment it feels like the LA will help us but we do not know how. We have talked about a whole school staffing review but this will not fix the problem. I have shared that I would like to reduce the PAN to 30 with the LA but that will be a problem for them because Catherine Moseley has shared the birth rate information with me. We may go over 30 in future years but are unlikely to be full in accordance with our PAN at 45. This means in future years we will continue to need two Reception teachers but don’t have the necessary funding to afford the costs. Other previously 45 PAN schools in the area have already reduced to 30 PAN. |
| Q | Did the LA factor in the new buildings going up in the area? |
| A | The LA told me that we need to stay with a PAN of 45. St Paul’s, Millbrook and Micklehurst are all 30 PAN. Arlies was the next nearest with 45 PAN and they have also reduced to 30. We are the only school with 45 PAN in a 3 mile radius, possible more. The LA need to give us some money to help if we are to stay at 45 PAN. At the moment, it is not a good time to do a support staff review with Covid-19 and it will not fix the financial issues long term. There are things we can do with the present staffing team which will be beneficial for the children but it will not fix the financial gap. |

*Mr Leech joined the meeting at 17:05*

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| Q | What is the latest on the birth rate? Are we expecting numbers to go down over the year? The birth rate increases in four years. Are the numbers going down for every school or are they down at Buckton Vale only and, if so, why? How much can we rely on birth rate data? |
| A | It is nothing to do with Buckton Vale: the school’s reputation is extremely positive. The staffing team have done a great job and we are open and honest and ready to learn. I have every confidence in the Buckton Vale team. I have expressed my concerns before about the cost of property in the local area as it is very difficult to attract young families to the area. Properties are sold extremely quickly and the school is in an area which parents are keen to move into because of Mossley Hollins High School. Also, families are growing older but staying in the area so we have no new families coming into the area.  Looking at the birth rates, it looks like we will go over 30 but I am not convinced we will be full at 45 which is a massive cost to the school. |
| Q | Can Milton St John’s take an extra class? |
| A | The bulge year was a few years ago, just for one year. |
| Q | The LA must have contingency funding for variables when schools are in this position. |
| A | Tim Bowman assured me that he will be in touch again and will keep me informed early next week. The staffing team are very nervous. |
| Q | If you had a surplus teacher because of this situation, can the LA release additional funding on the basis that the teacher may be able to work in another role? |
| A | It affects the entire team, you have to look at the whole staffing team not just individuals. I need to know if I need to do a whole staffing review. |

7.9 SDP Recovery Plan 2020-21

A governor commented on the quality of the SDP Recovery Plan.

**8 Governing Board items:**

8.1 Report from Chair including Chair’s virtual briefing on 14 September 2020

The Chair was unable to attend the Chair’s virtual briefing but the Clerk would forward the slides as soon as they were available. She summarised the presentations in relation to challenges in light of Covid-19 and reviewing/monitoring risk assessments; Ofsted visits focused on how schools are returning to the normal curriculum; head teachers’ performance management, pay and appraisal; HSE inspections, risk assessments and the welfare of the Headteacher. The Headteaher confirmed that she had a call from the HSE on the second day back at school and that Lisa Cox took the call. There was no further action from HSE recorded.

8.2 Learning Walks 2020-21

8.3 Report from governors with special responsibilities

No visits to school had taken place.

8.4 Governor training

The Chair encouraged governors to complete online training. The Clerk commented that virtual training would be offered after the October half term.

8.5 Budget Plan 2020-21

Governors acknowledged the challenges which school faced. The Chair confirmed that the budget plan needed to be submitted to the LA by the end of October.

8.6 To confirm arrangements for the Headteacher’s Performance Management Review

The Headteacher would arrange the meeting with the external SIP and Panel before 31 December 2020.

8.7 To confirm arrangements for the Pay Committee’s annual review

The Chair would arrange a meeting of the Pay Committee before 31 October 2020/

**9 Safeguarding**

9.1 Safeguarding Effectiveness/Awareness/Update

Governors agreed that safeguarding had been discussed at minutes 7.1, 7.2 and 7.8 above.

9.2 Local Authority Safeguarding Audit

The Headteacher confirmed that the Section 175 audit would be completed and sent to Stewart Tod, in the autumn term.

**10 Any Other Business**

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| Q | Following the Governing Board/COP meeting on 22 July, I asked whether the LA would still honour government advice to fine families if they did not want to send their children to school. At that time, the Headteacher thought it was the wrong approach and would speak to the EWO. If parents want to home school for health reasons there is a precedent because children can be supported with home schooling if they are “educationally difficult”. Do we have any clarification from the LA? |
| A | I have had questions today about children being home schooled and parents choosing not to send them into school. Looking at guidance, it is not encouraged - if a child has a place in school they should be in school. However, I understand that the number of Covid-19 cases in Tameside is increasing and there is some anxiety especially if a member of the family has health concerns. We are empathetic with families and asked Joanne Cherry to contact the LA and Partnership to see what they are doing about it. We are dealing with anxious parents and we want to keep children and families safe but it is difficult because guidance suggests children should be in school and government supports issuing fines. |
| Q | There is a precedent for “educationally difficult” children to be educated at home.  It seems morally unconscionable to allow children to be taught from home when they are “difficult” but then in a pandemic which, if they were unlucky enough to fall prey to, could leave them in the psychologically damaging position of potentially infecting a vulnerable family member.  The government has given the LA some leeway to govern this at a local level (for example when the R number rose above 1 and we carved out our own response to that) beyond PHE’s guidance.  The child would not be removed from the school roll so funding is still there because school takes up a supportive role. |
| A | One of the things which concerns us is the difficulty of a 75/25 split with one teacher. It would be impossible for the teacher is requested to support home learning as well. |
| Q | Is it something school could talk through and work on with the local Partnership so it would not fall just on Buckton Vale? |
| A | What could the Partnership do? |
| Q | Could all schools sing from the same educational song sheet, White Rose maths,  etc and have those lessons there and share the burden? Can the LA move in to support? We need to give parents as much leeway as we possibly can and it is likely we will have to produce this work anyway in the event of another lockdown. |
| A | Staff are on their knees, there is not one person in this building who is not exhausted. They are working 60-70 hour weeks and emails are coming in on Friday nights at 9 pm. We are not coping. |

There being no further items for discussion, the meeting closed with a final reminder that the discussions which had taken place were confidential.

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| *Meeting details* |  |
| *Time started* | *1600* |
| *Time finished* | *1745* |

**ACTIONS ARISING FOLLOWING THE VIRTUAL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING HELD ON 16 SEPTMBER 2020**

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| **Min** | **Resp** | **Action** | **Audience** |
| 1.2 | All | Complete declarations of pecuniary/business interest | SBM |
| 2.1 | SBM | Arrange parent governor election | GB |
| 6 & 8.7 | HT & Chair | Arrange Pay Committee meeting before 31/102020 | - |
| 6 & 8.6 | HT & Chair | Arrange HT performance management committee before 31/12/2020 | - |
| 9.2 | HT | Complete Section 175 Audit | Stewart Tod |