

CORE GROUP REVIEW AND PLANNING MEETING (remote)
Friday 2nd April 2020 at 1.30pm
Minutes

Present:

Simon Ball	Head of School - DCE
Paul Blackburn	Chair - WDCE Governors
Bev Burrows	Head of School – St. Elisabeths
Paul Good	Chair – Trust & DCE (MDBE)
Lee Jamieson	Chair - St. Elisabeth's Governors
Hannah Large	Head of School - WDCE
Helena Miller	Head of School – St. Wilfrids
Matt Whitehead	Executive Headteacher

Apologies

Andrew Bradley	Chair of Governors – St. Wilfrids
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In attendance

Kathy Crotty	Clerk
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1. Introductions and Attendance

Paul Good welcomed all chairs and heads to this meeting.

2. Current home provision update/forward plans

DCE – Simon Ball

SB reported on the home learning provision which is sent out weekly via the home learning newsletter (send Sunday or Monday) with tasks for the week. DCE acknowledges all parents are in different situations and not all parents are expected to be able to undertake learning with their child. Today the school shared a large list of online contents with reminders about online safety. The school is receiving some excellent work back from children and parents are working well with teachers. DCE has settled into a pattern. There will be no new work set for the Easter holidays but activities will be set.

WDCE – Hannah Large

WDCE is providing similar weekly activities on the school website and via the school newsletter. There is Email correspondence with parents, sharing news and the work of

the children. Over Easter the school will suggest optional craft activities. The school is receiving mainly positive feedback but has received one complaint. The school is using a combination of online platforms and staff set a couple of worksheets each week with literacy and numeracy tasks alongside many suggested activities. .

St. Wilfrids – Helena Miller

St. Wilfrids is using Dojo as 98% of parents are connected and all class teachers are liaising with parents. This is working well. The school is planning to hold a remote (Zoom) meeting with SLT next week to discuss the few children not producing home learning. Generally, the feedback from parents is positive.

Seesaw as a learning resource will be used at WDCE as this avoids the needs for printing but St. Wilfrids has reviewed this and thought this might be a struggle for parents. Paul Good reiterated schools should use online learning platforms that school and parents are familiar with.

St. Elisabeths – Bev Burrows

St. Elisabeths uses seesaw and finds this a good way to keep in touch with children. Weekly work is uploaded to not over face families. St. Elisabeths has a broad timetable. The school usually sends activities for over the holidays but will not send any this time. The school will send science and history / geography after Easter. Scavenger hunt maybe sent out for over the Easter holidays. The school has accessed free e-books from Oxford Owl (all schools in the Trust have signed up for this). Exercise books for some families are being left at the front of the foyer to be collected.

White Rose are offering online mini-sessions for maths learning.

Matt Whitehead acknowledged home learning is working well across the Trust with the different platforms, and noted activities rather than set work is going well.

Paul Blackburn reminded heads about the range of BBC resources and schools can signpost to these.

3. Current school-based provision update/forward plans

DCE – Simon Ball

The school has settled into team A and team B. Staff not self-isolating have made an appearance in the school. There are between 18 and 23 children in the school. The school is into a settled pattern. There is a two-week rota for teachers and a three-week rota for LOs and TAs

WDCE – Hannah Large

There are between 18 and 23 children and team A and Team B staff do not have to do a full week in school. Most teachers are doing one week on and one week off. There are two staff members self-isolating on health risk advice, but working from home supporting colleagues. All other staff are part of the rota.

St. Wilfrids – Helena Miller

There are between 16 and 20 children in school each week. Team A and Team B are split so there are four teams each doing 2 / 3 days working well. The majority of teaching staff are in school including TAs.

St. Elisabeths – Bev Burrows

St Elisabeths are also working with two teams. Some staff are self-isolating, other staff are volunteering for additional shifts. The LA (Stockport MBC) have requested Paediatric first aiders must be on site if there are children under the age of five. This means the schools needs to know in advance to ensure the paediatric first aiders are on the rota when those children are in school.

Children are loving the activities when in school. The school is using the reception classes due to their location and the cleaning schedule. Even Lego has been cleaned. *(Tip for cleaning is to place Lego in a pillowcase then the washing machine)*

4. Safeguarding matters

DCE – Simon Ball

SB was thanked for the updated policy he shared and was asked to share a word version of the e-safety documents with BB. The policy is following Manchester's lead. Daily updates from the LA are proving to be very useful.

In relation to safeguarding issues one or two have arisen from conversations. The contact with parents has revealed one parent and child living not at home but there are no major issues.

WDCE – Hannah Large

WDCE have no children with a social worker who requested a place so the school has offered places to those children who were identified as benefitting.

HL asked if the school has not heard back from parents how long should they wait before alerting others. It was clarified if staff cannot make contact with parents the office and safeguarding lead be informed. The clerk informed the meeting other schools will respond to no contact in line with attendance monitoring procedures which may involve a home visit.

HL was uncomfortable with staff using phones from home (GDPR and Safeguarding) and have bought school mobiles. Paul Blackburn identified some concerns from the trade unions from using home phones.

The suggestion was made the Head of School uploads a weekly video message on the school website and this was rejected. The Trust is not asking any staff to undertake activities they are uncomfortable with.

St. Wilfrids – Helena Miller

HM reported the school has made contact with the majority of St. Wilfrids children. The school has undertaken a home visit with a translator to one family.

St. Elisabeths – Bev Burrows

St Elisabeths has delivered six boxes of food to families which was a good way to check on families. If a family is not at home when visiting the authorities will be alerted.

Online learning

HL expressed reluctance to provide video class teaching and MW reassured Heads this is not the way forward and the skill set used in the class room cannot be replicated remotely. These are extraordinary times. Teachers might not be comfortable in front of a camera. Online resources and activities can be used as appropriate but there is a different level of safeguarding to consider when doing this.

5. Vulnerable children

DCE – Simon Ball

DCE has registered with Chorlton and Didsbury foodbank for the first time. Vouchers have been issued and shopping has occurred for one family. The school is up to speed with FSM vouchers. There are seven children in DCE with EHC plans and four of these children are in school and this is going well.

WDCE – Hannah Large

IN WDCE all vulnerable children are in school. The school will open over Easter (not bank holidays) as requested for the children of key workers and vulnerable children.

St. Wilfrids – Helena Miller

St. Wilfrids term dates included only one week at Easter and will be open for four days over Easter. The school has allowed two families to attend school for the four days next week.

St. Elisabeths – Bev Burrows

St Elisabeths has two vulnerable children that have been discussed with the social worker, the school is to offered as respite. One vulnerable child is remaining at home and one child at CP level is in school and not coping well. The school will open next week including Good Friday as there is a demand for provision.

HM asked about some families not following guidelines about social distancing and their children are in schools. This creates issues for staff who are following guidelines. This has occurred also at WDCE and this poses a risk for staff in the school. The Trust view is the schools cannot police the families when not in school. Key worker children are exposed to additional risks, the same as those not social distancing. Staff must follow own hygiene advice and practice social distancing children where possible.

6. FSM provision

DCE – Simon Ball

There are seven children from five families. The Edenred voucher system is being used. (DfE scheme)

WDCE – Hannah Large

WDCE is using the Edenred voucher system.

St. Wilfrids – Helena Miller

St. Wilfrids is just waiting for passwords to access the Edenred system. There are issues with families on the cusp of qualification for FSM who are experiencing financial difficulties. The school has advised families to go the LA for support and has signposted to the helpline.

St. Elisabeths – Bev Burrows

St. Elisabeths is using a local provider making sandwiches. There are 54 FSM children and the take up is from 39 families which is low. The meal provision will continue over the Easter holidays

7. Staff Welfare and other staffing matters

DCE – Simon Ball

SB reported there is a good team spirit in DCE and staff appear to be galvanised. Staff issues have been resolved. People in isolation are receiving calls from colleagues. SLT are ringing their own teams. SB is ringing cleaners and admin staff. New dynamics are occurring among the staff teams and staff are integrating informally and developing a collective bond.

One member of staff decided to stay at home as someone was unwell in the home but this person should have been available as this was not in a risk category. This may lead to a loss of income and the staff member has been made aware. The school is following the DfE guidelines and ensuring equity among staff.

WDCE – Hannah Large

HL reported staff are doing different tasks than usual. There is some resentment to deal with about who is being sent home when not needed. There is an issue with a staff member at Kidz Club not available for normal hours and this will be addressed with the Executive Headteacher.

St. Wilfrids – Helena Miller

All staff at St. Wilfrids have received welfare calls. One staff member is claiming to have Covid-19 symptoms for the second time so this will be explored.

St. Elisabeths – Bev Burrows

BB reported there is a good team spirit in St. Elisabeths and staff have volunteered to work on Good Friday. BB is following advice regarding staff self-isolating. There is an issue with staff still off work sick and this is being followed up by HR. One staff members sick note ended last week and this person was due back at work this week. Staff seem willing to attend school.

8. School Holiday provision

DCE – Simon Ball

DCE open for eight days staffed from four mini teams (A, B, C, & D) each led by an SLT member and each team for only 2 days weeks. The rota has been shared with staff and there were no issues. The school has taken the opportunity to use Pat Callaghan for sports coaching. School activities will be replaced by holiday activities such as craft and the children will not be required to wear school uniforms. There will be between 10 and 14 children over the two weeks

WDCE – Hannah Large

WDCE is opening for eight days and it was noticed the SENDCO Emilie Smith is on the DCE rota too so this needs reviewing. All other staff only need to be in school for two days. The school is expecting a maximum of 13 children first week and a maximum of 16 children the second week. This will be informal with no school uniform and a packed lunch.

St. Wilfrids – Helena Miller

St. Wilfrids has 4 days for Easter and will open. Team A (split into 2 teams are in school for these four days and will do Easter activities. Staff will be working two days on and two days off.

St. Elisabeths – Bev Burrows

There are not many children expected but some parents are waiting for their own work rotas before seeing if they need a school place. The school is able to work with two teams (A & B) and each team will have a 14 days holiday possible on this rota.

PG noted there may be two public holidays after Easter and asked Heads to make sure the staffing cover takes account of who has worked over the Easter holidays. So far, staff in all schools have volunteered to work the bank holidays. The schools in this Trust are not opening at weekends (a local high school has been asked but their daily attendance has been three children). The numbers are lower with older children.

Lee Jamieson thanked all the Heads of School for all the work undertaken during this crisis.

9. Recruitment

Recruitment is needed especially at WDCE and St. Elisabeths. The discussion focused on the mechanics of interviewing online or in a building with social distancing. This will be considered further with the Executive Headteacher and Head of Schools. HL suggested a temporary appointment or supply staff and look to recruit later in the year and this was considered. Government guidance is yet to be issued regarding recruitment.

There are three NQTs in WDCE and it seems the qualification attainment may overlap with appointments. NQT guidance is if the NQT is doing well they can complete this year even though the evidence for the final term will be difficult. Guidance has been issued by the DfE and schools can extend the NQT or if they accept the person has met the threshold, they can complete their induction.

It was felt whilst temporary TA appointments might work this is not satisfactory for teaching staff. Appointment of teachers is likely to be progressed online which is preferable to not having sufficient staff in place for September. There are three positions to fill at St. Elisabeths and there was no support for using supply. Manchester schools have the early career framework and they want to partner with SJE to pilot this. There might be a two-year probationary period.

It was agreed there was a need for a recruitment timetable and each head and chair to start the process for their schools. At St Elisabeths there is a shortlist for vacant posts and the interviews need to occur after Easter.

10. AOB

LGB board meetings

Heads and chairs discussed using Zoom for LGBs. This format of core group meetings has been agreed by Trustees; Governors can be reassured good governance is occurring. Recruitment can be dealt with by HoS and chairs to decide the best solution. The situation is changing rapidly and it was felt this core planning group is the best mechanism to support schools. The core group agreed to share these minutes with all governors and governors are receiving updates from the chair of the Trust.

Future agendas to include finance. The clerk will share the proposed agenda in advance of the meeting to enable chairs and HoS to add any items as appropriate.

Links with the church

BB reported on the work at St. Elisabeths to balance all curriculum areas for home learning. As part of collective worship there will be an online weekly prayer for children after Easter. Rachel Bundock done two Godly play stories for the WDCE website. Nick Bundock is still sharing thoughts for the WDCE school newsletter.

Paul Good prayed that staff would remain healthy and gave huge thanks to the leadership for their management of this crisis and asked HoS to pass on thanks to senior leaders in the school. The role of other leaders has been crucial in supporting heads of school.

11. Date and time next meeting

Tuesday 14th April at 1.30pm

12. Closing prayer

The closing prayer was led by Paul Good