

**Core Group Remote meeting
Friday 18th September 2020 at 11.30
Minutes**

Present

Simon Ball	Head of School - DCE
Andrew Bradley	Chair of Governors – St. Wilfrids
Bev Burrows	Headteacher– 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

Paul Blackburn	Chair - WDCE Governors
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In attendance

Kathy Crotty	Clerk
Sarah Storey	Chief Financial Officer

1. Risk assessment – review with children back in school

SECE - Bev Burrows

- BB reported the RA (risk assessment) is working well and the school is able to use four entrances. The main differences are there are staggered starts; new equipment for the children; lunches on a rota; and many sanitisers around the school. The playground is zoned for three classes at a time. Lunchtime is now settled.
- The challenges are the staff shortages as much as nine staff missing on some days. The Headteacher is finding it hard to stay out of the bubbles. One Education music service have identified the room is not suitable.
- Parents are very understanding of the changes. There is some crowding by parents on the pavements near the school and letters have been sent home. There are lines on the walls and reminders of the need to distance for two- meters.
- The CoG confirmed the well being of staff is a concern. Stockport MBC have produced a useful document which will be shared in staff rooms.

DCE - Simon Ball

- The RA is working well, the school has three entrances and similar procedures to SECE. There was a challenge of moving lunch out of classrooms into the hall for hot

lunches. There are 120 children in the school hall, all in separate bubbles following a system.

- Social distancing for parents outside the gates is a challenge with the narrow pathways. Local residents and parents parking on the kerb reduce space further.
- Kids club staff have been absent due to sickness and LOs are sick, others have stepped in. There is a good community feel among the staff.

SWCE - Helena Miller

- Similar procedures are being followed as the other school. The main issue is parents social distancing outside the premises. There is a staffing issue, one day the school had seven staff not in work. There is some heightened staff anxiety due to cover. The next phase is for the school to move to hot lunches, this starts next week. Generally, there is a good vibe in the school community.
- Public Health have done a spot check of how the RA is working and this went well.

WDCE - Hannah large

- One child was showing Covid-19 symptoms over the weekend, and tested positive so the bubble was closed. These children are due back Monday the 21st September. Manchester City Council guidance has now changed so you can shut the bubble without waiting for public health to respond. Parents have raised issues about isolating and siblings.
- The reception children settled in remarkably well and only one child was upset out of 60 children.
- There are 90 children using the school hall, over three sittings. This impacts on TA time and means the TAs may need to have lunch during teaching time but this is the safest way and this is working well.

Matt Whitehead – generic positives and negatives.

Parental perceptions of the job we do as teachers following weeks of home learning has meant parents are very grateful to see their children return to school, Children are safe in school, only one bubble out of 44 has closed in two weeks. Children have settled well although the pace of lessons is a struggle for some.

The staff positivity has been uplifting, they are a credit to the Trust. The RAs are working well in all schools.

Waiting for tests is affecting staff attendance but this is a national problem. There will be more spending on supply cover than what was projected in the budget.

Staggered lunches are being refined and this affects the length of the school day. Ingress and egress remain a priority affecting well-being of staff.

The chair of the trust gave formal thanks to Heads for their thorough work on the RAs

2. Numbers of children attending

Across the Trust the attendance was 95% but might be a bit lower today.

SECE – Bev Burrows

SECE has attendance of about 95% which is excellent. Seven children have left the school, and two new children have joined.

DCE – Simon Ball

DCE attendance is 95%. 228 Out 238 of children are in school and yesterday this was 96%. New children have joined the school; the PAN is 236 but class sizes are 32 in KS2. There has been some movement over the summer.

SWCE – Helena Miller

SWCE attendance is 95% which is pleasing. Admissions are at 232, with two appeals on the 1st October for reception. Five children joined the school recently and there are three on the waiting list.

WDCE – Hannah Large

- 350 out of 360 children are in school. 320 were due in school this week. 291 in out of 320 are in school, 29 are off today. The attendance is over 90% disregarding the bubble isolating.
- The question was asked if the reasons for absence are genuine illnesses and HL reported there is one family of two children who are taking longer than usual to return and children are tending to be absent with more minor illnesses such as a cold. People are over cautious which is understandable.

MW noted all schools have attendance above the current national average (88%) and this was commended

3. Staff concerns/wellbeing

SECE – Bev Burrows

Most staff absence is Covid-19 related. Staff are finding it hard to remain in their bubbles. The deputy headteacher is absent due to a family member testing positive. The trade unions have been contacted by staff but she has not tested positive so there is no risk. There is not much flexibility to move staff around

DCE – Simon Ball

Staff continue to be tremendous and supportive. Some LOs were absent today and other staff are covering. Staff feel safe and supported and morale is good.

SWCE – Helena Miller

Staff absence not related to Covid is a challenge for the school plus there are staff members needing tests. There is a buzz around the school and the staff are very positive. The school has purchased Perspex screens which can be cleaned easily.

WDCE – Hannah Large

The school is positive, the team are amazing and are pulling together. Staff are being praised for their support in implementing the new procedures. Three people are in and out of school. HL is working in the different bubbles but keeping distanced. Staff are allowed to wear face visors if they wish. The training day emphasised staff are trusted to follow the government guidance when outside of school. Reading is an activity staff are mindful as distancing is not possible.

4. Preliminary budget closedown figures

Across all four schools there is healthier balance as Covid-19 has reduced expenditure. However, supply cover costs are increasing and the pay awards are 3.1% for teachers and 2.75% for support staff. This will not be supported by a

government grant but will come from existing allocations. Extra hours have been granted to some staff to meet the new hygiene measures.

SECE – Bev Burrows

The budget figures are now updated and will be circulated after this meeting. The budget set from September 2019 predicted a £70,000 surplus and this is now higher, there is a preliminary surplus carry forward of £149,776

The other three schools are also more positive.

- DCE is currently projecting a £13,000 surplus but the budget is expected to be balanced by year end.
- SWCE is currently projecting a £93,000 surplus but this may include CIF funding.
- WDCE predicted £6,000 deficit and currently has a £60,000 predicted surplus.

The Trust is looking at cloud-based system for the finances so that the new CFO can support all SBMs.

5. Reports on building work carried out over summer

SECE – Bev Burrows

- The fabric of the building is looking good, a wide maintenance programme has been carried out over the summer. The work which occurred over the summer was outlined. All lighting has been updated at a cost of between £10,000 and £15,000. The painting work identified damp linked to the roof and a CIF bid might need to be reassessed for repairs. There is a problem with a leaning wall which is being replaced. A building survey is needed.
- An outdoor classroom is being explored with money left in a trust fund.

DCE – Simon Ball

Refurbishments on outdoor equipment have occurred over the summer paid for by PTA.

SWCE – Helena Miller

The school has a new boiler and heating system in the main school building. This took six weeks and was an extensive project. There are some snagging issues and areas to finish during the October half-term. The contractors were efficient but the industrial cleaners were not so good, the school cleaning staff had to get the school ready for opening. It was suggested for future contracts the contractors pay the school cleaning team rather than a commercial group – this might be cheaper and more effective.

WDCE – Hannah Large

As a new building there are not many building issues other than the building is too hot and too cold. There has been some playground maintenance undertaken and the priority is now the overheating of the upstairs. The air circulation system is not working correctly. This is a health issue if air is not being expelled and filtered correctly.

6. Plans for catch up

All schools are undertaking evaluations of gaps in learning.

SECE – Bev Burrows

- Baseline assessments in nursery are occurring. Assessments are occurring in Yr1 to Yr6. NFER spring term tests being used. The catch-up curriculum is not yet devised until the gaps are identified. Phonics interventions are being planned. The school is considering purchasing CPG revision books for Yr6 and will purchase 'cracking comprehension' which is quality first teaching. Reading will replace MFL on the timetable. Reading recovery will be implemented when the outcome of assessments is analysed. Already use many interventions.
- The Home Learning Policy is in progress.

DCE – Simon Ball

- Summer tests are being used to identify gaps. In the mornings the focus is refresher input. Each teacher has been asked to identify between three and six children who might need extra input from the TA.
- The catch-up premium is being used to employ a TA for one year from November, and the advert is now out.

SWCE – Helena Miller

- Baseline assessments are occurring and SLT are making decisions soon about the best use of the catch-up funding. Interventions are already occurring. Data for autumn 2 should show some progress. Quality First teaching is the priority and there is a training session organised for staff.

WDCE – Hannah Large

WDCE will use the catch-up funding to advertise for a temporary TA for one year to work with small groups. Assessments are occurring. Teachers can reduce some of the national curriculum in the short term but this needs to be covered at a later date. The homework is pre-learning, not consolidation of school learning. This will empower the children and familiarise with the language. This is working well.

The Executive Headteacher commended all staff for their plans for catch-up and asked heads to consider if there are any gaps that can be offered online. The idea for additional staff was also welcomed. The Trust is keen for each school to develop school specific solutions.

7. Plans for remote learning if needed

SECE – Bev Burrows

- The school will keep using Seesaw. A recent survey was administered as during lockdown, SECE had less engagement than the school wanted. Homework grids are linked to topics and the children bring in work completed at home. Homework is linked to key objectives. Families are being signposted to Bitesize and Oak Academy. The school issues a three day mini-pack to children who are sent home.
- There is a timetable for the home learning including five sessions of maths and English per week.
- Staff are anxious about teaching videos of themselves. DCE is using voice overs instead. WDCE found videos take longer and there are concerns about being recorded or videoed.

DCE – Simon Ball

- DCE has purchased “screencastify” which works well with chrome. (Screen video recorder). This takes a flip chart and voice over using an MP4. This is an American programme costing 29 dollars for individual teachers.
- Google classroom is being explored as part of ‘G suite education’. All forms parents are required to complete are now online and this move to online is being introduced more and more with older children.

WDCE – Hannah Large

- Seesaw platform has been used for the bubbles isolating. This is a free platform. The Government gave £1,500 for Microsoft upgrades but these options have some technical issues being addressed.
- The school has clarified what equivalent lessons can be offered remotely. The expectations are five sessions of maths and literacy per week. There is more learning for home learning than during lockdown. The engagement is being monitored. The school is looking at loaning devices.
- Parents who isolate their children are also expecting teacher to set work but the teacher is still teaching the class so generic learning (not personalised) will be uploaded.

The Executive Headteacher suggested there is a need for a consistent Trust Policy on staff being videoed. Heads felt local solutions need be available as the families in each school are different and there are varying degrees of access to internet. DFE guidance is the home learning should be as good as in school but this not realistic.

Online assemblies are proving successful and the remote learning resources are improving all the time. Heads shared some good resources.

8. AOB

SECE – Bev Burrows

An e-safety incident was raised and there is a concern the recovery curriculum might need to unpick what children have been exposed to during the lockdown period.

WDCE – Hannah Large

E-safety is also an issue. The website has been updated to address e-safety issues and now addresses modern sites being accessed. Parents need to be signposted to the school website. The school has clear expectations which have been shared with parents.

Action: clerk to include e-safety on future agendas

9. Date of next meeting

- The value of the core group was discussed given that LGBs are now meeting remotely.
- The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 20th October at 9.30am

10. Closing Prayer

The closing prayer was led by Andrew Bradley.