

## Directors' Note for Portfolio Groups

Portfolio title: Witheridge LGB

Date of meeting: 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020, 4.00pm

Attended by (all virtually): Sue Wells (chair), Adrain Wells, Phil Asson, Kathryn Stewart, Lucy Ratcliffe, Rhian Nicholas, Verity Goss (clerk)



### Brief overview of discussion

SW welcomed all to the meeting. AW led the opening prayer.

SW reminded governors that this was not a formal meeting, but an update for LGB members on the current situation in schools. Governors wished to thank LR, staff at Witheridge and across TEAM for the all the work that they had been doing.

LR agreed that it was challenging times, but that she felt well supported by the school community. LR explained that staff had continued talking to children through weekly Zoom sessions (those that weren't able to attend had been talked to on the phone). LR felt that this had helped maintain a sense of school community and ensured the children knew staff still cared about them. Staff were aware that due to many factors levels of engagement from children was different – staff had tried to not put pressure on parents, as the wellbeing of children was the main focus at this time.

The school had been open through lockdown (except for May half term) for children of keyworkers and vulnerable children. Since the beginning of June the school had also been open for the government specified year groups, and the numbers attending was increasing. Staff were facing a joint challenge of children who had not been in school for a long time, and children who had been in throughout lockdown and were now feeling tired from working in such a different environment. LR stated that the non pupil day at the beginning of June had been very useful for staff induction of those who had not been in over lockdown.

LR stated that children were coping very well with distancing in class and in the playground within their bubbles. During playtimes games were encouraged which helped maintained distancing. LR explained that children were aware of what cleaning needed to take place and liked to remind staff.

LR felt that the transition process with secondary school was going well, and explained what had happened so far. Staff were also providing Y6 teacher assessments. Main concern for Y6 children was not having seen the buildings of their new school – LR would suggest a virtual tour to Chulmleigh. In school transition to new classes would be supported with Zoom sessions with their new teacher. LR stated that the benefit of a small school was that children would already know their new teacher to some extent.

School meals – throughout school closure the cook had been putting together food packages for children entitled to Free School Meals, and had put thought into ensuring the ingredients worked together. Voucher system would be used over the summer – buses were now running again, so it was easier for parents to reach a supermarket. Most parents had already requested to be transferred to the voucher scheme. LR had found the food packages to be a good way of keeping in touch with eligible families.

No children had qualified for the government laptop scheme. School was providing paper copies of learning materials for families that needed it.

LR informed governors that in September all children would be reassessed to see what level they were currently working at. Staff were currently working on the basis that

children would be at the level they were when schools were in March. Children would be supported to catch up where needed. Staff were also aware that there may have been an impact on children's mental health due to lockdown, and would need to support children in readjusting to school life.

At this stage full guidance for September was not known in terms of class sizes and school capacity, and it was expected that work would be needed on this over the summer holidays.

LR explained plans to convert the current pre-school building into a FSU for both pre-school children and reception children. Currently they were in different buildings which made it hard for them to work together. Moving the two classes into the same building would enhance free flow learning, aid transition of pre-school children and help staffing requirements. It was hoped that work on this would happen over the summer holidays.

SW thanked all for joining in. Governors thanked RN for her work and wished her a happy retirement.

**Date of next meetings: Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September, 5.00pm.**