

## Directors' Note for Portfolio Groups

Portfolio title: Witheridge LGB

Date of meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Attended by (all virtually): Sue Wells (chair), Adrain Wells, Kathryn Stewart, Lucy Ratcliffe (Head of School), Verity Goss (clerk)

### Brief overview of discussion

#### Procedural items

##### Welcome and apologies

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

Apologies received and accepted from Darren Henson.

##### Declaration of business interests

None declared.

##### Sign off previous minutes

Minutes accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

##### Matters brought forward

None.

##### Correspondence

None received.

#### Monitoring and Accountability

##### Data Review: Autumn term progress

LR reported on progress made in the autumn term. LR stated that it was difficult to monitor progress when children were learning from home. Y2 children had taken the phonics screening check – 79% had passed, which was in line with national results.

Children had completed an assessment in December – good progress had been made in all years. Attainment in Y3 was lower than other years – LR explained the interventions that were in place in this year group. SW reported on the standards across TEAM schools as reported at the standards and scrutiny meeting – all schools had seen good progress, which was felt to be a testament to the work that staff were putting in and the hard work of the children.

LR highlighted that good progress had been made in Y5 where concerns had been raised at the previous meeting, evidenced the effectiveness of the interventions in place.

Attendance for autumn term – LR reported that this was good across the school, and that the high levels of attendance had contributed towards the progress that the children were able to make. Pre-school 98%, Class One 95%, Class Two 97%, Class Three 96%, Class Four 96%, Whole School 96%. Local governors agreed this was positive. LR reminded local governors that Covid related absence did not affect the attendance percentage. LR felt fortunate that there had not been any positive cases amongst the children, and was grateful for the efforts made by parents and staff in keeping the children safe.

#### Teaching plans during lockdown

LR explained that children were receiving live lessons four times a week. A weekly task sheet was added to Google Classroom, with an accompanying video. Daily feedback was provided to children, either by e-mail or on Google Classrooms. Teachers also responded to questions about the learning. LR reported that it was currently effective. LR explained that there were also zoom meetings arranged for children to talk to each other and play games, to allow them to continue to keep in touch with their friends. These were well attended and enjoyed by the children.

Some families were taking part in the Solihull parenting program. LR reported that this lockdown there were a greater number of children who were considered vulnerable, and explained the pastoral support in place for these children.

#### Group Specific learning support

LR explained the targeted intervention in place for the vulnerable children currently attending school. The definition of a vulnerable child was broader during this period of school closure. Two of the children with EHCPs were not attending school – one was shielding and learning from home, with daily one to one sessions with TAs, who were adapting materials to be suitable for their learning. The other not attending was not engaging with school, and support was being sought from the EWO.

Overall Class Three had lower engagement – LR stated that this could be judged by things such as the number of views on videos. Staff were working on

ideas to engage these children more. All classes were very engaged in the live lessons. Many children were sending work to be looked at and marked, and were engaging well with the feedback process.

A local governor asked if it was possible for those not engaging at home to come into school, and whether disengaging with school made them vulnerable. LR explained that there were a higher number classed as vulnerable in school this time, and that not engaging with school work did not always mean the child would meet the criteria to be able to come in.

LR shared the result of the home learning survey which had been sent to parents. Overall children were enjoying their home learning. There had been some good positive feedback. Results of survey had been in line with conversations staff had had with parents. A high percentage had responded that their child was not able to complete all the work set. LR stated that the work being set was of a quantity that would have been able to be completed in school, but acknowledged that distractions of home life could make it difficult for children to complete the work set. One day a week was now assigned to catch up time and non-traditional school tasks such as cooking or outdoor learning, with the aim of promoting the wellbeing of children. Parental feedback on this had been positive.

There had been a good response to the question about children having access to a device. LR explained that staff had looked at responses where parents had indicated they only sometimes had access to a device, which had shown to be where there was more than one child sharing. As there were high numbers in school there were limited devices that could be lent out – the school had received five laptops from the government which had been lent to families with no devices. The school had also received a donation of some laptops which were being reset so they could also be lent out. LR stated that a laptop was the preferred device, but a tablet was possible. Children who only had access to a phone had been invited into school. Staff knowledge of families and phoning parents to ask had helped identify where there was a need. LR stated that possible help had been highlighted in the newsletter.

LR stated that having daily Zoom sessions this time was useful from a Safeguarding aspect as staff were able to see children every day. The monitoring sheet was still used in case escalation was needed where a child had not been in contact, but this had not had to happen this time. LR felt that overall parents were more engaged this time, and were keen to join in with the learning.

#### Engagement & Safeguarding during Lockdown

Discussed earlier.

#### Health and Safety – including update on windows

LR reported on the Health and Safety walk completed the previous week. No major issues. Installation of windows had been completed, including the installation of the new automatic front door. LR stated she was very happy with the new windows. To finish the project the wooden cladding was being painted to match the roof and windows.

FSU fence – materials had been delivered, and were waiting for installation.

Play equipment – some updating wanted.

Toilets – main toilet block currently split into girls' toilets and boys' toilets. Since the requirement to keep children in bubbles, one was used by Class Two and one by Class Three so that bubbles were not mixing. Feedback from younger children had been that they preferred this, as they were not sharing with children much older than themselves. A local governor questioned whether older girls would be comfortable with this, as they may not want to be in the same facilities as boys when they were menstruating. LR explained that there was a separate toilet available for girls use which was kept stocked with supplies in case they were needed, and that currently Class Four was using the individual disabled toilet, which could also continue, which gave girls privacy.

#### **MAT Issues**

##### Report on TEAM SIP team, autumn term

SW reported on the previous trustees meeting, which had emphasised how much children were at the forefront of decision making. A change of information management system was being introduced which would make administration smoother across the trust. Local governors discussed where working together in the trust had previously been of benefit to Witheridge, which led to a benefit to the children.

Curriculum teams – LR explained the sharing of subject leads across TEAM, which was of great benefit to staff in smaller schools. LR reported it was also good to work as part of a group when planning for a particular subject.

LR highlighted some opportunities for staff across the trust – Head of Pilton Bluecoat had been invited to a school in Cornwall to advise on maths teaching, and as part of this would take other trust staff, including a staff member from Witheridge, to experience sharing their knowledge.

## **Strategic**

### Review pupil numbers, projected numbers, pre-school numbers

Currently 89 in main school, 111 including pre-school. Two more families were due to start in March. Reception for September was yet to be confirmed, but currently expecting 10 to start.

LR reported that Ryan Manning had passed his NQT year and was now a fully qualified teacher.

Staff were now taking twice weekly lateral flow tests. LR confirmed that all other guidance was being followed in school.

## **Any other business**

None.

A local governor asked if any attendances were affected by long term health needs. LR stated there were some children, and that going forward there was a concern that children may be affected by mental health problems which could affect attendance. A lot of work was planned to ensure children were confident in returning. It was felt that children were finding this period of school closure more difficult, possibly affected by the weather and not going outside so much, or picking up on the increased expectations from the government on what they should be doing. A suggestion was made to look into online content to help monitor this at home.

Local governors appreciated seeing activities posted to the school Facebook page. LR confirmed that outdoor tasks had been popular, and it was felt that having specific tasks made it more likely children would spend time outdoors, which was known to be beneficial.

**Date of next meetings:** Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March 5.30pm