

**Hovingham & St Hilda's, Ampleforth CE Primary Schools' Federation**  
**Minutes of an Emergency meeting of the Full Governing Body**

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020, Virtual Meeting**

*[Meeting was conducted using Microsoft Teams due to Covid-19 restrictions]*

**Present:**                    **Clare Almond** (Chair)                    **Jayne Conacher**  
                                   **Amy Kirk**                                        **James Pynn**  
                                   **Andrew Reid** (Vice Chair)                **Jane Richardson**  
                                   **Johanna Senior**                                **Frances Standen**

**In Attendance:**        **Helen Lowdell** (Clerk)

**Apologies:**                **Martyn Boothroyd**

**Core Functions:**

*Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction*

*Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils*

*Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent*

*Meeting started at 5.30pm*

Item	Minute	Action
FG/20/042	<b><u>Welcome</u></b> The Chair welcomed governors and said a prayer.	
FG/20/043	<b><u>Apologies for absence</u></b> Martyn Boothroyd sent apologies for health reasons. <b>Apologies were consented to.</b> Jayne Conacher joined the meeting later due to technical difficulties.	
FG/20/044	<b><u>Declaration of Interest &amp; Items of Confidentiality</u></b> There were no declarations of interest. There were no items of confidentiality.	
FG/20/045	<b><u>Previous Minutes</u></b> <i>[Minutes from the meeting dated 19<sup>th</sup> May had been circulated with the agenda]</i> Governors scrutinised the public minutes of the meeting held on 19 <sup>th</sup> May. The minutes were <b>agreed</b> as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.	
FG/20/046	<b><u>Governing Body Business</u></b> <b><u>Governing body decision making</u></b> It was noted that governors had expressed concern about a letter sent to parents that did not fully reflect discussions from the previous meeting. The Chair apologised and explained that the decision had been made to alter school reopening plans in response to advice and further information from the School Improvement Adviser, Matt Blyton. He had raised concerns about the fact that the letter had initially made no reference to vulnerable children. <b><i>Q. Do we legally have to be open to vulnerable children?</i></b>	

	<p><b>A. We have to have provision for them or to make provision available.</b>  The Chair went on to explain that M Blyton had questioned the decision to not open the schools for children in Y6. He noted that all of the other schools he worked with had plans to re-open.</p> <p>To help make sense of a very fast-moving situation, the Head offered the following timeline:  14<sup>th</sup> May: DfE published the Planning Guide for Primary Schools  15<sup>th</sup> May: Unions met with scientists  19<sup>th</sup> May: Emergency FGB meeting  20<sup>th</sup> May: Proposed letter sent to NYCC for advice  20<sup>th</sup> May: NYCC released a 161-page transition document  21<sup>st</sup> May: Head spoke with M Blyton and the Chair  22<sup>nd</sup> May: Updated letter sent to parents  22<sup>nd</sup> May: Head met virtually with almost all staff and the Chair  24<sup>th</sup> May: DfE published the Planning Guide for Early Years  26<sup>th</sup> May: Re-opening leaflet sent to parents  27<sup>th</sup> May: Nick Gibb, Schools Minister said that it was <i>'difficult to say whether more pupils from Y2-Y5 would return with a rota system.'</i>  28<sup>th</sup> May: SAGE to meet  1<sup>st</sup> June: Schools to begin re-opening</p> <p>It was noted that keeping track of updates and communicating with parents in a timely manner had been challenging.</p> <p><b>Q. Have you had parental responses?</b>  <b>A. Yes and lots of them have been positive.</b>  The Chair explained that she had been under pressure to get information out to parents but felt that it would be useful to have a process in place to inform governors about rapid decision-making situations. She felt that expecting governors to be constantly checking their school email addresses was unachievable.  The Clerk suggested contacting governors by text or personal email to alert them when important information had been sent via school email.  Governors <b>agreed</b> to this arrangement.</p> <p><u>Communicating with parents</u>  It was noted that all communication between parents and the school about operational matters should be through the Head.  The Chair had responded to an email from a parent by explaining that Governing Body minutes would be published on the school website following approval and by referring to DfE guidance. The Head thanked the Chair for her response.</p>	
FG/20/047	<p><b><u>Headteacher Updates</u></b></p> <p><u>Schools re-opening: Logistics</u>  The Head had sent re-opening leaflets to parents and had been into both schools to plan for re-opening withing social distancing regulations. This involved taping the floors into two-meter exclusion zones and organising secure waste management as well as fielding replies from parents.</p> <p><b>Q. Do you feel that the day to day reality of teaching going forward is in your mind? Can you see how it would work?</b></p>	

**A. To an extent. It is fluid and there is some uncertainty about key-worker children as not all parents have replied. There are some key-worker families who have not yet taken a place so the picture could be very different.**

**Q. Have staff fed into a realistic estimate regarding capacity?**

**A. A document that was shared at our last meeting mentioned capacity, but the Early Years document published on Sunday evening had a different requirement. I had thought that we would be working with 2m but it now says 2.3m. Logistically that doesn't sound a lot, but it can make a huge difference. My concern is that, this was slipped in on Sunday night. How many other things will be released over the next few weeks and days? Schools will have worked very hard on this and will now have to go back and make changes.**

**Q. Are children expected to sit at desks? I know there's guidance but for our schools – what are your expectations?**

**A. My expectation is that they are functioning within that 2.3m space. A Headteacher in another setting has spoken about the concept of 'kingdoms'. Children will be able to see what's happening in another kingdom, but they won't be able to visit it.**

**Q. How many children will there be in Reception if they all come back?**

**A. At Hovingham we are expecting 4, so there will be 11 in the mixed – age class. At St Hilda's we will have 5 in Reception and some from nursery so a total of 7 or 8.**

**Q. Have you been planning the space in terms of the 2.3m areas or by the number of children?**

**A. I started by working out 2m spaces, taking into account things like radiators and I have had some indication of who might come back. We have some definitely yes, some definitely no and some maybe.**

**Comment: Things are very fluid. Whatever people say now might change, especially as parents start to talk to each other.**

**A. If they have said 'no' or 'not yet', I will keep in contact with them.**

*[J Conacher joined the meeting at 6pm]*

**Q. What planning is there in place for staff and the schools to respond to variables?**

**A. This depends on when and what the change is. On Monday and for the first week we can do what we need to do for a wider re-opening.**

#### Sites

The Head explained that there had been some concern among parents about children from each school mixing.

**Q. Why are parents worried about this?**

**A. It's about mixing with a wider group of people than they need to. My response has been that our school communities have always been split due to geography. I have also pointed out that schools have been using hubs with the model of children from more than one school coming together.**

**Q. How are you seeing the transition from one site to both?**

**A. My aspiration is to see whether opening at Hovingham on the 8<sup>th</sup> June is achievable.**

The Head went on to outline a plan for different groups over the next two weeks:

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> – Keyworker children to start

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Y6 to start

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> – Reception to start at St Hilda's only (pupils from both schools to be invited to St Hilda's)

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> – Both schools open to Y6, Reception and Y1

**Q. Are there any staffing issues with this?**

**A. Yes, and there are also building issues.**

The Head went on to explain that the staff toilet at Hovingham was leaking and that there was no hot water in the staff toilet. He had been advised that repair would be straightforward but that a part was needed. Governors questioned whether this was a good enough reason to not re-open the school. The Head did not feel the building could safely open without hot water in the staff toilet.

**Comment: [Head] There is also the logistics of me working across two sites. I would like to be there when each school opens for the first time. But I am equally minded that there are families who want and need schools to re-open and they would interpret 1<sup>st</sup> June to mean 1<sup>st</sup> June.**

**Q. I know that parents are concerned about children from each school mixing but as the Headteacher of the Federation, you will be mixing with children in both schools. Is there any concrete guidance about this?**

**A. Not that I have seen but different schools and federations have found different solutions to this. I know of one setting where they will be based on one site while others are going back to two schools so there is a mixture.**

#### Staffing

Governors discussed staffing at Hovingham. The Head explained that steps had been taken to arrange maternity cover starting in October 2020 but that supply would also be needed prior to that due to advice regarding pregnancy and Covid-19.

**Q. Has the staffing situation been communicated with parents at Hovingham?**

**A. Yes it has.**

**Comment: I am concerned about parents expecting to get back to normal, but the schools will have to manage.**

**Comment: We're not alone in this. Many children [in other schools] will not have their usual teacher and some schools have opted to put children in with their teachers for next year to speed up the assessment process. And all of this is against the backdrop of Y2-Y5 potentially working on a rota.**

#### Outdoor space

**Q. Can you tell us about the outdoor space at Hovingham? Obviously, we have a tiny courtyard. Would we be allowed to use the green and do you have any concerns about this?**

**A. I have not begun to ask that questions. I have presumed that it's so counter-intuitive...in my mind the children must be based on site.**

**Q. Could you have a rota on that space?**

**A. Not on the green.**

**Q. What about the space beyond the felled trees?**

**A. That's another public space.**

**Q. What about the playground?**

**A. Yes, the Early Years area and the main playground can be split in half to create two bubble zones.**

**Comment: I think it is ludicrous that it's considered safe to go to school but they can't use the green that they will be walking past every morning to get into school!**

**A. I would need to take advice. It's not part of the risk assessment so I would have to take that to staff and the Unions. This is partly why the St Hilda's site offers so much more.**

**Comment: This is not a criticism of the schools – all the government advice is so contradictory.**

**Comment: I agree. As a teacher I can work with 16 children but I'm not permitted to see children in my family.**

Teaching and learning

**Q. In terms of curriculum, how will children be taught and what is in place to tackle anxiety? I know you are not expected to teach a broad and balanced curriculum so what's the plan?**

**A. It will depend on who we have and how they present but we would need to be extremely flexible.**

**Q. Have the staff communicated readiness? Is there any anxiety about this?**

**A. We have a good Teams meeting to discuss logistics, teaching and home learning. Home learning may change now and may not be so fulsome. I want people to work smart. When we do open more widely, we have got to continue to work smart.**

The Head went on to explain that he would like to see English, Maths and Mental Health being a focus in the mornings and something broader in the afternoons. It was noted that the DfE expected end of year reports to go out as usual despite the situation.

**Comment: It is going to be an incredibly stressful, challenging time for everybody and staff will need a lot of support and understanding. Everybody has a life outside of school and my concern is that messages [from the DfE] are not clear or well-timed. Sending out a key document on Sunday evening at the start of half-term is appalling but this is the land we live in.**

Governors continued to discuss teaching and learning, and the following points were raised:

- Children could spend the afternoons working on PE or watching a film
- Home learning could move towards good quality English and Maths and the opportunity children to follow their own interests
- An alteration to home learning in other settings had caused concern among parents
- Staff were keen for equality between those coming back into the schools and those remaining at home.

	<p><u>Parental choice</u></p> <p><b>Q. Is there an expectation that children will come back to school every day?</b></p> <p><b>A. I am mindful that parents are sending children back for a variety of reasons. For some it's the right thing to do. For others there is pressure from their workplace. People will not be penalised for keeping a child at home.</b></p> <p><b>Q. Are we going to have a system so that you know who to expect?</b></p> <p><b>A. I'm happy to look at that but we need to be prepared that children might not come in. We will follow up with a phone call as usual.</b></p> <p><b>Q. Are we expecting pick-up and drop-off protocols? Will there be lines drawn on the pavement?</b></p> <p><b>A. No because that's a public space but at St Hilda's we will make some creative use of posts [to implement social distancing]. I will not be staggering opening and closing times but we do need to keep that under review.</b></p> <p>Governors were informed that the following responses had been received from parents  Hovingham reception: 1 'no', 2 'yes' [site preference to be clarified] and 1 no response.  Hovingham Y1: 2 'no', 1 'yes' [only at Hovingham site]  Hovingham Y6: 2 'yes [only at Hovingham site] and 2 no response  St Hilda's Nursery: 2 'no or not yet' and 1 no response  St Hilda's Reception: 1 Keyworker, 1 'no', 1 'not yet' and 2 'yes'.  St Hilda's Y1: 2 'no', 2 'not yet', 2 'yes' and 1 no reply  St Hilda's Y6: 1 'no' [concern about mixing with Hovingham children], 1 'maybe in 2 weeks', 1 'yes and 1 no reply.</p> <p>Governors suggested informing parents of the low numbers of pupils expected to return to try and alleviate fears about children from the two schools mixing.</p> <p><b>Q. What is the process of communicating with parents from now on? Is there a weekly newsletter?</b></p> <p><b>A. I think the 'Message from Mr Pynn' will continue and this will reflect what's happening in the schools, home learning and the latest guidance.</b></p> <p><b>Q. In terms of transition, should we be contacting the children expecting to start in September?</b></p> <p><b>A. Contact has been made but I like the idea of including them in the weekly newsletter.</b></p> <p><b>Q. An email has been circulated today about school transport. Assuming we are using one site, are the Hovingham children entitled to transport to St Hilda's?</b></p> <p><b>A. I have not had that conversation and I aspire to open Hovingham on 8<sup>th</sup> June.</b></p>	
FG/20/048	<p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>Governors agreed the following next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head to consult staff about opening Hovingham on 8<sup>th</sup> June and about inviting Reception children back from 3<sup>rd</sup> June.</li> <li>- Final decision to be made by Chair and Vice Chair</li> <li>- Governors to be kept informed by email</li> </ul>	

	- Chair to alert governors of important communication via personal email or text - Head to share numbers names of children expected back at school in a document on Sharepoint.	
FG/20/049	<b>Next Meeting</b> Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June, 5.30pm	

*Meeting ended at 7.05pm*

The following acronyms may have been used throughout the minutes:

<b>ARE:</b> Age Related Expectation	<b>EHCAR:</b> Education Health and Care Assessment Request
<b>EOY:</b> End of Year	<b>EVA:</b> Esk Valley Alliance
<b>EYFS:</b> Early Years Foundation Stage	<b>FGB:</b> Full Governing Body
<b>FSM:</b> Free School Meals	<b>GLD:</b> Good Level of Development
<b>GSINs:</b> Governors School Improvement Network meetings	<b>KS2:</b> Key Stage Two
<b>KS1:</b> Key Stage One	<b>NYCC:</b> North Yorkshire County Council
<b>MSL:</b> Maths Subject Leader	<b>PAN:</b> Published Admission Number
<b>NAHT:</b> National Association of Head Teachers	<b>RIG:</b> Rapid Improvement Group
<b>NQT:</b> Newly Qualified Teacher	<b>RSE:</b> Relationship and Sex Education
<b>RI:</b> Requires Improvement	<b>SDP:</b> School Development Plan
<b>ROV:</b> Record of Visit	<b>SEN:</b> Special Educational Needs
<b>SBM:</b> School Business Manager	<b>SGOSS:</b> School Governors' One Stop Shop
<b>SEF:</b> Self Evaluation Form	<b>SIAMS:</b> Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools
<b>SENC<sub>o</sub>:</b> Special Educational Needs Coordinator	<b>SPO:</b> Strategic Planning Officer
<b>SFVS:</b> Schools Financial Value Standard	<b>SRE:</b> Sex and Relationship Education
<b>SIA:</b> School Improvement Advisor	
<b>SIRO:</b> Senior Information Risk Owner	
<b>SPOC:</b> Specific Point of Contact	