

## Minutes of the Extra Ordinary meeting of the Full Governing Body of Ivydale School, held via video conference on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 6:00pm

### Present

Mr Alasdair Buckle (AB)

Ms Carol Frazier (CF)

Ms Helen Ingham (HI) (**Head**)Mr Peter Lilford (PL) (**Vice Chair**)

Ms Jessica Skinns (JS)

Ms Miriam Facey (MF) (**Vice Chair**)Ms Lynne Gravatt (LG) (**Chair**)

Ms Suzy Kirk (SK)

Mr Bartley Shaw (BS)

### Also Present

Nicole Galea – Clerk

Judith Lambert – Deputy Head

<b><u>PART 1 Governor Business</u></b>	
<b>1</b>	<b><u>Meeting Arrangements</u></b>
1.1	<p><b>Apologies for Absence and agreement for remote participation</b></p> <p>LG thanked Governors for attending this video conference meeting resulting from the Covi-19 lockdown. The Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received in advance from Kimberley Starke, and that the meeting was quorate. It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to agree to the meeting being held remotely and to the absence of KS</p> <p>The absence of CM, FR, AT and RW were noted; LG undertook to follow up on this. [POST MEETING NOTE: it was subsequently confirmed that these governors had not received the meeting invitation].</p>
1.2	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b><u>Covid-19 – Head’s Update</u></b>
2.1	<p><b>Business Critical Decisions</b></p> <p>LG advised that advice to Boards is that meetings should be limited to business critical decisions (which will be discussed under Item 2.2); all other items will be deferred and discussed when usual business resumes.</p>
2.2	<p><b>Head teacher’s Report</b></p> <p>HI referred Governors to the report that had been circulated in advance; stating that it provides a snap shot of where the school is now and tries not to speculate on what the happen next. She highlighted from her report that: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child care is being provided 8am – 6pm, Monday – Friday including Bank Holidays when needed for Ivydale pupils and children of staff</li> <li>• Attendance is increasing and has ranged from 5 to 18; most attend for a few days per week, 1 child attends 4 days per week and 1 daily.</li> <li>• Parents with children considered ‘vulnerable’ will be reminded again this week of the offer and that part time places are available. However, for a variety of reasons there is a reluctance amongst many parents to send their children in.</li> <li>• The Bellwood site alone is being used and is cleaned daily</li> </ul>

- There is only 1 cleaner and 1 of the 3 members of the Premises Team available – the latter is in school daily to carry out the usual checks, topping up soap, paper towels etc.
- Pupils wash hands regularly but reminders to socially distance are a challenge especially with the younger children
- Staffing on site has been minimised and includes the safeguarding and 1<sup>st</sup> Aid requirements
- Families at home are being supported via emails bi weekly and for vulnerable families, this is weekly. Where there are concerns and parents have not responded, staff have even conducted some door step visits.
- Contact with the Early Help team and Social Services has been maintained and they have proved to be responsive as needs have arisen
- The school is signposting families to other forms of support and funding.
- The national FSM voucher scheme is now up and running and being used. However, many families are experiencing food shortages; staff delivered food parcels for 2 weeks for the most needy, they signpost families to food banks and continue to look at other ways to widen the food support available. Southwark's position is that all primary children are entitled to vouchers because they are entitled to FSM. After the school has paid the catering company (invoice just received) it will then be necessary to work out what each child is entitled to; this is expected to be approximately £2.20 per child per week. Children in school are given breakfast, packed lunch and an afternoon snack.
- An increasing number of families have subsequently applied for FSM either because their circumstances have changed during the lockdown or, due to Southwark's free school meals policy, they had not previously felt the need to apply but are now doing so to access the vouchers.
- The home learning on offer is based on the premise of it being sustainable, manageable and accessible both for staff, pupils and parents. Pupils can now email their work to teachers and they will get a response; it tends to be the younger years that do this. Online learning options were considered but the benefits were outweighed by safeguarding and access concerns.
- In the week up to lockdown, a daily letter was sent to parents regarding the changing advice. Since lockdown there have been numerous communications covering wellbeing, notifications on those eligible to come into school, home learning and updates as and when available. There has also been a 2 weekly newsletter.
- Staff sickness / absence was initially significantly high and currently 25% of staff are shielding / self isolating due to their own or family members' underlying health conditions. 20% have self isolated at some point since 16/3/20 (SK has confirmed that this is in line with Sainsbury's) although no staff have been tested. 2 are stranded abroad.
- All staff (except HI / JL / RF and some office staff) had 2 weeks off for Easter which was staggered over a number of weeks.
- In addition to those classroom staff on the premises, others are responding to queries, planning and report writing. The office team are all working very efficiently from home.
- There is an online CPD programme for staff which is linked to the SDP, safeguarding and to support staff wellbeing.
- Team leaders are in contact with their staff, the unions are also providing support and there are many opportunities for virtual social meets.

#### Moving forward

- The school is fully staffed for September, the restructure is on hold and the staff who were thought to be leaving in July will now be staying. Additional recruitment may be needed for newly approved EHCPs.

- HI is on the Southwark Steering Group tasked with the re-opening. Schools will only re-open when the evidence shows that it is safe for parents, children and staff to do so. At present there is much speculation on how the return will be managed but in all likelihood it will be a phased approach and a number of systems related tasks will need to be completed in advance.
- Plans are being made to support pupils on return; there is concern regarding emotional wellbeing and pupils' varying experiences during lockdown – there has been no known significant illness amongst pupils but it is likely that there has been some abuse and that some children may not have left home for the duration. It will also be difficult for some staff to return
- The SDP and the national curriculum are on hold but consideration is being given to addressing the expected increase in gaps in learning and there is planning for all transitions (introduction to Ivydale, moving classes, phases and leavers). Staff are also mindful that some pupils will not return until September at the earliest due to parental concerns.
- Nursery and Reception admissions procedures will go ahead with the exception of pre visits which will be re-scheduled for September; the focus will be on current pupils.

**Governors asked the following questions:**

***Has the school furloughed any staff?***

The LA advice has been that contracted staff cannot be furloughed as the school is funded by the public purse. The challenge for the school is that breakfast and after school club staff roles are funded by the parental payments for these services which are not currently being received. However, 2 agency staff who were working at the school before lockdown have been furloughed by the agency; the school is continuing to pay the agency but will be able to claim this back.

***Governors recognise the hard work and care of HI / JL / RF; what plans are there for you to have a break given the strain of the last 2 months and lack of an Easter break?***

HI thanked Governors but stated that they are happy to do as much as they can do at present; they split their time between coming into school and working at home but will review the situation pending the next round of government advice. Gavin Williamson – the Secretary of State for Education has said that there will be no pressure on schools to open over the summer but if the coronavirus situation does not change this could change. However, many staff have worked above and beyond during this period and will need a decent break before the long autumn term.

***Are you exploring online learning options like other schools in case the lockdown continues in some form, even if it is not exclusive? How could families be further supported who would like to do more with their children and for those that do not have digital access?***

JL stated that there is a wide range of offers from different schools. Some schools are using printed worksheets – these keep children busy but have limited benefit for learning. SLT have been investigating online options and will continue to do so. However, there is a huge range of learning needs and staff are aware that families are in a variety of circumstances: time available, level of English, different expectations etc. The school is cautious not to overwhelm parents and this makes it difficult to decide on one route.

The school has used various options and signposted alternatives so that families can decide what is best for them. Every year group is receiving weekly maths, writing and reading work; the link to the Oak National Academy has been sent and further reminders will also be sent. There are high quality resources available which teachers are in the process of sending out to pupils such as White Rose Maths; which provides a daily mix of taught elements and optional worksheets. There are now some charges for this provision; the school will continue to pay for it but is

investigating how to adapt the offer. In addition, they have tested other provision such as pre recorded music assemblies from the Music teacher but this is a huge challenge to organise and there are concerns about the sustainability of the offer.

HI stated that there are safeguarding concerns with teachers providing live lessons via a digital platform when not all families have access or sufficient devices to use at specific times of the day; the needs of staff who may also have childcare responsibilities or who may be in school. These factors impact on the sustainability of this type of provision. There has been a lot of different feedback received from parents. Governors recognised that there will be increased gaps between pupils' learning and that layers of tools and channels may offer greater options for more parents.

**A Parent Governor reported that feedback from parents has been that there is so much available for parents to choose from that they would value the structure of an Ivydale specific online platform with some pre recorded videos from teachers across the week.** JL stated that this is essentially what the school is providing but in written form and in combination with the daily BBC lessons which are of much better quality than they could produce or have the time to do. Many parents are successfully accessing this.

**Concern was expressed that the work being set is not being monitored.** JL confirmed that the work is being monitored, careful records are being kept and staff are following up on pupils' learning and wellbeing.

**Have you surveyed the extent of digital access?** JL confirmed that when parents were surveyed many said that they had access but were using appliances to work from home.

**Governors asked if there is a plan to survey parents for their views.** JL confirmed that an analysis of the requests received from parents will be carried out to see if there are any common themes and the range of requests. This can be forwarded to Governors.

**What input is being considered to bridge the gaps in September?** JL and HI stated that the national curriculum is currently frozen; it is based on building on what has been previously learnt so staff will need to look at what key skills have been missed and what needs to be recovered. However, teachers support children who are at different places under normal circumstances and the widening of some gaps will be a national issue. SLT will be looking at the staffing situation - who returns at what point and the skills available. There is no financial benefit to deferring the restructure but it will mean that staff will be available that they did not expect to have and will look at how they can use them to further support learning. Curriculum Co-ordinators are looking at the key gaps and strategies to fill them which may involve back tracking on the curriculum. However, staff are aware that it will not only be the academic needs that will need addressing but also pupil's (and staff) emotional wellbeing. There is an ongoing process of planning but it will essentially depend on when and how pupils return and there are very many 'what if's' to be considered.

**Governors expressed concern at the gaps increasing in school and noted that it would be useful if teachers could let parents know the expectation of where their child should be and where they actually are so that they can better target the support they give at home.** JL stated that this would be difficult to do at a distance as all children are different. Reports will be sent out at the end of term; they will be based on pupil progress up to 20/3/20 and contain individual targets. However, JL and HI agreed that they would review how else the school could support parents to support their child's home learning.

JL

	<p><b>Governors queried the extent of contact the school has with families at home and the purpose and asked if staff have an understanding of what pupils are learning?</b> HI stated that most families are contacted fortnightly but this increases to weekly calls for specific families. Parents are also encouraged to contact the school if they need any additional support, resources or to clarify learning points etc. Staff use all contacts as an opportunity to check in; if possible they try to speak to the child. It is mostly to monitor wellbeing but can also be an opportunity to check on needs and if the school can do anything further to help. There are a wide range of responses and requests; many are thankful for all that the school is doing and consider that the approach is balanced and adaptable. All calls are logged.</p> <p>JL added that they have also introduced a home learning surgery where individual queries can be answered, or specific explanations provided. Staff are mindful that pre recorded lessons will be fine for many children but will lack the flexibility and adaptability of a usual class lesson for all.</p> <p>Furthermore, HI reported that she, JL and RF review all of the school's systems weekly and make adaptations where necessary.</p> <p>In conclusion, it was agreed that HI / JL would provide: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an analysis of the parental comments and requests received</li> <li>• an overview of the monitoring conducted</li> <li>• a sample of home learning</li> </ul>	
2.3	<p><b>Update from the Chair</b> LG confirmed that she had taken no Chair's Action.</p>	
2.4	<p><b>Continuity Plan</b> Governors agreed that there is a sufficient cascade of responsibility within the GB in case of sickness with the following arrangements: -LG / MF / PL / Committee Chairs.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b><u>Safeguarding</u></b></p>	
3.1	<p><b>DSL Arrangements</b> It was noted that this item had been covered by the Head's Report.</p>	
3.2	<p><b>Contact with Families</b> It was noted that this item had been covered by the Head's Report.</p>	
3.3	<p><b>Online Learning</b> It was noted that this item had been covered by the Head's Report.</p>	
3.4	<p><b>Safeguarding Policy</b> HI reported that the Safeguarding Policy which had been distributed in advance included the LA model addendum for Covid-19 which will be in place for the duration of the pandemic. It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to ratify the policy as presented.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<p><b><u>Finance – Report from the Resources Committee</u></b></p> <p>HI reported that the Resources Committee has discussed these items at their meeting on 30/4/20 (minutes to follow).</p>	
4.1	<p><b>Closing 2019 / 20 Budget</b> HI reported that the year end closed with a smaller than predicted deficit thanks to the school's careful management of the budget; it has now been submitted to the LA. AS has also informed the LA of the extent of the impact on the school based income.</p>	

	<p>HI stated that the Budget Deficit Plan has been discussed at a number of meetings; Covid-19 has resulted in a number of aspects of the plan being deferred: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the LA HR advice is that the redundancy and restructure plans should be put on hold. These plans can be discussed again with the LA but it is unlikely that the process will start again before September.</li> <li>• the opportunities for 'natural wastage' based on staff who had informally indicated that they would be leaving but are now not doing so because their plans have been impacted by Covid. However, this is very positive for the school as it will provide greater consistency for September.</li> <li>• Furthermore, the school has been advised that the extended schools' staff cannot be furloughed and must continue to be paid but the income that would usually fund their roles (parental fees) is not being received. MF advised that HMRC has a direct helpline that could provide definitive advice.</li> </ul> <p>HI advised that furthermore, the restructure relied on a number of actions taking place which, due to the pandemic, have also stopped – such as the Southwark panel which has not met.</p> <p>These factors will worsen the school's position in the short term but the plan itself will be reinstated as soon as it is possible to do so.</p> <p>SK advised that the committee discussed school's ability to furlough and also Southwark's position that redundancy cannot take place at this time, which is different to some other LAs. AS is also reviewing the situation with suppliers. She advised that the Budget Deficit Plan will be revisited post Covid to see what can be carried out and what amendments can be made.</p> <p><b><i>Governors discussed the importance of the budget documentation clearly recording that the LA is imposing an additional cost to the school by not allowing furloughing or the restructure to take place without offering any additional funding to compensate.</i></b> HI confirmed that she was willing to take these points up with the LA again in the hope that they could lead to a saving and seek a written response, and also to put Governors' concerns to them.</p>	
4.2	<p><b>SFVS</b></p> <p>HI reported that the SFVS document needs to be finalised before it can be submitted to the LA. She stated that despite negative comments received from some at the LA regarding the financial management of the school, the new comparative data dashboard within the SFVS depicts Ivydale as fairly average and mostly green in the RAG rating. Interestingly, it also does not distinguish between schools with split sites or additional costs which presents Ivydale in an even more positive light.</p> <p>It was agreed that once LG has added the final comments the document would be signed off by SK / HI and AS.</p>	LG
4.3	<p><b>2020 / 21 Budget Setting</b></p> <p>It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to ratify the budget for 2020 / 21 based on the recommendation of the Resources Committee subject to the LA confirmation that the cost saving options that they have stopped are correct and that they will not provide reimbursement. HI undertook to seek confirmation of these points with the Head of Southwark HR.</p>	HI
4.4	<p><b>Any other critical finance matters</b></p> <p>There were no further items to report.</p>	

5	<b><u>Staffing</u></b>  It was noted that this item had been covered by the Head's Report.	
6	<b><u>Meeting Dates</u></b>  Governors discussed whether to continue with the schedule of planned meetings for the remainder of the school year. HI noted that this meeting had been changed from the scheduled Standards meeting due to the cancellation of the FGB on 30/3/20 but that advice is that Governors should limit virtual meetings to urgent and time critical matters.  Following discussion, it was agreed to: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have a combined CFC / Standards Committees meeting on 10/6/20 (time TBC)</li><li>• BS and JS as the committee chairs to agree the agenda with HI</li><li>• all Governors to be invited to the meeting and papers circulated in advance</li><li>• The Clerk to collate a list of outstanding actions and deferred items from all spring and summer term meetings to be reviewed in the autumn term.</li><li>• Resources Committee to meet as planned on 24/6/20</li><li>• HI to provide a written summary update at half term including the numbers of pupils expected to be in school and the end of lockdown plan</li></ul>	
	There were no other items and the meeting concluded at 8:00pm.	

Signed ..... 

Date 23/09/20 .....