

CORE GROUP REVIEW AND PLANNING MEETING (remote)
Monday 18th May 2020 at 1.30pm
Minutes

Present:

Simon Ball	Head of School - DCE
Paul Blackburn	Chair - WDCE Governors
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

In attendance

Kathy Crotty	Clerk
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1. Update on each school – current provision

DCE – Simon Ball

There are still two classes of KW/V (key worker and vulnerable). children There are 27 children in school today and the school is expecting over 30 in Tuesday and Wednesday this week. The children are focusing this week on social distancing, the school is separating the children to establish some routines ready for more children joining. There will be no physical contact at lunchtimes and during play so these children will be the experts when more children come into school.

SECE – Bev Burrows

There have been no significant changes, the school is still using Seesaw for home learning. The school is now preparing for more children coming in the school. There were eight children in SECE today, the numbers have remained low.

SWCE – Helena Miller

There were between 33 and 34 children in SWCE last week, and 23 today. There is no consistent pattern and the school is still running two classes.

WDCE – Hannah Large

There were 26 children in WDCE today and the school has between 25 and 33 children. Today the staff have been exploring the environment to facilitate more children in smaller groups. WDCE will need to use a wider space and will need more staff in the school building.

2. Current Staffing issues relating to school and staff welfare

This is reported in the Part 2 Confidential Minutes.

Leaders were asked for a future meeting to identify how many staff cannot be in school after June due to their own health issues.

The level of support from leaders for their staff was commended.

3. Vulnerable children and safeguarding

This is reported in the Part 2 Confidential minutes

4. School readmissions – overview Matt Whitehead

- Each school in the Trust has been sent a letter with tentative plans for parents based on the guidance received so far. The return of more children needs to be planned. It makes more sense for older children to come into school first as they can socially distance. The clear situation is to stay at home to minimise the risk of transmission and if more children come into school then some degree of social distancing needs to occur, but this is very difficult to manage with younger children. There is a concern and it is noted that Scotland, N. Ireland and Wales are doing something different than England. Parents will need to be informed of what the school can offer in terms of a safe environment.
- Each school building presents different challenges. There is a useful St Elisabeth's CE risk assessment from Stockport MBC which BB has shared with colleagues and can be used as a template for our other schools. The current DfE guidance suggests up to 15 children with more than one member of staff per cohort. The creation of "social bubbles" acknowledges the social distancing of two meters will be difficult to achieve especially with younger children.
- The phasing of older children in the school first has been well received. Stockport MBC is not opening until the 8th June and then the first two days are school staff only to plan new ways of working and undertake health and safety training. The clerk informed the meeting MCC are supporting schools in finding the best approach to introduce more children into the school and many schools in Manchester are only admitting Yr6 in the first instance.
- There has been much goodwill from staff but the risks increase as more children enter the school. Staffing arrangements need to be equitable. Risk assessments for staff with medical conditions are useful. There is merit in having a training day mirroring Stockport MBC, provided for all staff before more children are admitted into the buildings. An independent assessment of all schools would be welcomed to assure parents. BB reported in Stockport, all school leaders are leading the health and safety training. The document created for staff will be adapted to share with parents.
Action: BB to share the training document for admitting more children into school with Heads of Schools.
- News coverage is focusing on the needs of vulnerable children and schools are open for all these children anyway. Schools are expected to mitigate the risks. The question

was asked about the care of KW/V children and the expectation is for their provision to remain the same as now unless they are in one of the year groups returning and they will return to their year group.

- It was noted how each school is thinking differently. Soft toys and tactile equipment are being removed in most schools as only hard surfaces can be sanitised. Sitting on carpets might be replaced by the horseshoe arrangement of desks. DfE guidance suggests normal learning so for younger children the usual equipment is expected with the most 'at risk' equipment removed. EYFS advice suggests not using climbing frames as this is shared equipment but DCE is planning to share outside equipment with different classes over the week on a day by day rota basis, as the three school climbing frame areas need to be in use as zoned areas on the limited play. Questions were asked about hanging coats and lunchboxes. It was noted there is a lack of national guidance on these very issues which is concerning. It was felt play areas in school grounds can be used as the issues about public parks was the adults congregating.

Action: Heads to produce an action plan (addressing risk assessments) which will be signed off by the Executive Headteacher and presented to Trustees.

The end of this week is the target date for DCE and WDCE and the end of next week for SECE and SWCE

5. School readmission to more children - individual school considerations and proposals:

Paul Good identified a consensus on these key principles:

- Each school will have a detailed risk assessment based on common principles.
- Three schools will provide a training day (SECE will provide two days training in line with Stockport MBC) in advance of the return of more children, to enable staff to be familiar with safe operating practices and safe movement of children including in and out of the building.

It was agreed these days would not open for the KW/V children.

- All schools would operate a phased introduction beginning with eldest children for up to two weeks with full evaluation before expanding the provision. It was acknowledged some schools might not need two weeks as schools have had different numbers of places wanted.
- If the initial expansion is successful schools will expand to readmit Yr1 and then Reception/nursery.

Planning update

DCE and SWCE have purchased individual pencil cases for the whole school. Cups can be used from the kitchen to hold separate pencils. There was a consensus is to allow Yr6 for a period of time (Yr1 in WDCE) and then Yr1 for a period of time.

MW reiterated the guidance and how the school will get full sooner under these guidelines, however, the guidelines are changing frequently. The children in school so far have not socially isolated and this risk has not affected the health of the children and staff.

SECE is planning to bring only Yr6 into school for the first two weeks and then review this before introducing Yr1. The two groups with the KW/V children will make the school full with two-meter social distancing. Reception parents are anxious about their children returning. SECE have the smallest classrooms, and a social bubble in each area will fill the rooms under the current guidance. SECE is closing over half term and

paying for families to have the FSM vouchers over the holidays at a cost of £900 a week.

In **DCE** there is a demand for 106 places, 20 in every year group including key workers in Yrs2 to Yr5. The plan is for the KW/V children to be in school the first day, and to add 20 children from Yr6 the next day. There are KW/V children for each year group. There are seven KW/V children in Yr1; seven KW/V in Reception; seven KW/V children in nursery. The school can add more children daily and expand the numbers of children quicker than the two weeks. The numbers currently in school lend to this.

In **SWCE** there are three groups of Yr6. Of 124 responses, only 50% of families want a place in June; 25% have refused a place in June; and 25% of parents were not sure yet if they wanted a place. The school intends for a staggered start and end times as there is a small walkway into school.

The DfE guidance suggests parents are not allowed on school premises. The need for sanitiser at the school gates is not needed because children can wash their hands when they get into classroom. Late children will be brought to the office.

Heads have to work on current knowledge and the guidance changes frequently. Advice was to go ahead in informing and working with parents. There has to be a clear communication from the Trust Board to Heads and there is an additional Trustees meeting this Wednesday the 20th May 2020 to discuss the plans for schools to admit more children.

Heads can expect information from the Trustee meeting on Thursday 21st May to share with parents.

The meeting discussed the position of the trade unions who are advising against additional children in school until all reassurances are met. The trade unions state the current guidance does not provide adequate safety measures. If there was industrial action wages will not be paid. The staff in this Trust are supportive of more children returning to school

SWCE, DCE and WDCE will let parents know the Trust is meeting this week to authorise the school plans. **SECE** can inform parents there will be no children in school during the two days training as this is similar across Stockport MBC

Trustees will be informed risk assessments will be completed and approved by the Executive Headteacher. Trustees do not have to see the risk assessments as they are responsible for Trust strategy and not managerial decisions.

Action: The next core group meeting scheduled for the 9th June 2020 will focus on the initial readmission of the school to greater numbers of children and those children who remain at home with a reduced workforce for home learning.

MW reported the DfE recommendation on home schooling for Yrs2 to Yrs5 and children not in school is to signpost parents to BBC Bitesize and the National Academy. It is recognised staff may be in school and not available for home learning.

PG asked Heads to review the parental uptake from PP children and suggested the Trust should take proactive steps to encourage these PP children from the year groups coming into schools. PG suggested a personal invitation is made to these children and families when the Yr6 children are settled in.

Action: Heads to inform the 9th June meeting how many FSM children are returning in the year groups being readmitted into school.

PG will reassure the board that there is a variation among the schools but all schools are undertaking risk assessments and operating a phased introduction of additional children into school. The health and safety training will be school appropriate to Covid-19 and will be provided by school leaders.

Liability issues were questioned arising from more children attending school from June 2020. Paul Good reporting as long as the Trust is acting in good faith adhering to the Nolan principles then the Trust is complying with public liability standards. This will be discussed by Trustees at the 20th May meeting.

The next phase will need to reassure individual heads they are fully supported.
Trustees present were very reassured and congratulated the Heads for all the work undertaken during this pandemic crisis.

The Yr6 curriculum was questioned and it was suggested this would include revision and gaps and preparation for transition. The clerk report on a citywide initiative which will issue all Yr6 pupils with a transition pack ("The Kid who came from space" by Ros Welford.) These are free resources designed to be used in school or at home.

The provision from Kids Club has varied. SWCE and DCE have not run the clubs, WDCE have for KW/V children and are looking to continue this. The expectation is more key worker parents will be asking for a school place.

6. Agenda items for Trustees meeting scheduled for 10th June

Re-appointment of Governors on LGBs

Liability issues arising from more children attending school from June 2020.

Encouraging more FSM pupils into school

7. Andrew Bradley led the closing prayer.