

YERBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the governing board meeting held by videoconference on Thursday, 21st May, 2020 at 8.00pm.

In attendance:

Rosemary Marsh	(Chair, Parent governor)
Rosamund Web	(Parent governor)
Cassie Moss	(Headteacher)
Sam O’Leary	(Co-opted governor)
Michael Delaney	(Staff governor)
Laura Keough	(Co-opted governor)
Fenella Bolton	(Parent governor)
Revathi Raghavan	(Co-opted governor)
Ben Fitzsimons	(Co-opted governor)
Zoe Richardson	(Associate governor)
Liam Frost	(Associate governor)
Alan Skea	(Associate governor)

Not in attendance / Apologies

Emily Briggs	(Co-opted governor)
Sarah Thornley	(Parent governor)

NB: “Staff governor” is used interchangeably for staff governors and staff associated governors in the minutes.

The meeting convened at 20:05.

CM gave an overview of recent events and current situation.

Yerbury has been open to critical and vulnerable pupils ever since lock down, commencing with 18 children attending.

In addition to in-school duties, school staff have been occupied in delivering food, preparing learning packs and providing arts & crafts materials to families known to be likely to need these. Staff also called and spoke to families where this was thought to be needed.

Staff and children attending have been happy. Staff have been rotated and given time off the rota to be able to have a break and to write mid-year reports (Liam: this is the Annual report for this school year). Reports will be sent out tomorrow.

Online learning has been run with new platforms that staff have worked hard to learn. Children get individual feedback. Daily videos are provided for motivation; dance and music videos are provided by Ben and Jess.

Futurezone is providing some projects. Teachers are managing one-to-one conversations with pupils on google classroom and parents by email. Huge comms efforts and 95% of children are engaging! An achievement to be proud of.

SEN and dyslexia contact continues plus CPD (bereavement training) for staff.

Staff have been incredibly committed and hardworking.

A governor asked how the teachers and staff all feeling.
Staff Governors gave their thoughts as staff representatives.

Staff Governor: It's been good but tough. Hard to turn off after work; children in year 5 are very engaged and it's a lot of work. Good but tough.

Staff Governor: as a teacher of younger children has probably had more contact with parents and families who are concerned but children are very resilient and excited to be coming back to school.

Governors expressed their thanks to the staff on behalf of parents.

Staff Governor: the school leadership team have worked incredibly hard and helped enormously.

CM turned to where we are now and what comes next. Messages from Government etc. are changing almost daily and there is discord between Government and unions.

Key to approach to return is to divide the school into pods that have no contact with each other. Pod is up to 15 children and will have one adult, either a teacher or a TA. If anyone in a pod becomes ill with CV-19 then the entire pod is to isolate for 14 days.

Yerbury has approached this from the bottom up by counting adults and children and calculating what can be achieved.

In response to a survey of parents 50% of parents said they want their children to return, 30% are not sure, 20% don't want to return. Survey had over 400 responses.

This is a higher number wanting to return than in other Futurezone schools where around 30% want to return.

Yerbury priority group is currently around 20 children but is growing to 90 for re-opening.

Islington Risk Assessment has been used and aligned with the checklist from the NEU. Checklist has been adapted to Yerbury's situation but Yerbury is fully aligned with the risk assessment.

A 2½ hour staff consultation on return arrangements was held today. Lots of detailed work on practices and processes has been done. Recovery curriculum focussing on health and wellbeing where children can process their experiences.

A document outlining returning numbers of children and class (pod) structure was “tabled” (circulated by email) and examined:

The numbers

Staff availability:

Staff currently on the rota to work in school:

	Teachers	TAs	SEN TAs	HLTA
Available	9	9	3	2
Not available	7	6	1	0

Staff *potentially* able to work in school following staff RA:

As of June 1st	Teachers	TAs	SEN TAs	HLTA
Available	12	10	3	2
Not available	4	5	1	0

Total number of rooms available: 19 rooms (+ 3 staffrooms)

Priority group numbers @ 21/5/20:

Year group	Children	Pods	Adults	Rooms
Nur	6	1	T & TA	1
Rec	8	1	HLTA & TA	1
Y1	14	1	T & SEN TA	1
Y2	10	1	T & SEN TA	1
Y3	13	1	TA & TA	1
Y4	16	2	T & TA T & TA	2
Y5	13	1	HLTA & SLT	1
Y6	16	2	T & SEN TA	2
Total:	96	10	6 Ts 2 HLTAs 5 TAs 3 SEN TAs SLT x1	

Number of children from survey: 400+ responses!

Year group	Children*	Pods	Rooms needed
Nur	24 (+/-4)	3	3 - max 4
Rec	34 (+/-10)	4	4 – max 6
Y1	50 (+/-6)	4	4
Y2	42 (+/-10)	3	3 – max 4
Y3	46 (+/- 5)	4	4
Y4	45 (+/-8)	3	3 - max 4
Y5	44 (+/-6)	3	3 - max 4
Y6	49 (+/-9)	3	3 - max 4
Total:	334 (+/- 58)	27	27 (max 34)

*yes and unsure combined

The Priority Group and with Y6 (top floor) and Y1 (middle floor) combined:

Year group	Children	Pods	Adults	Rooms
Nur	6	1	T & TA	1
Rec	8	1	HLTA & TA	1
Y1	12	1	T & TA	1
Y1	12	1	T & SEN TA	1
Y1	12	1	T & SEN TA	1
Y1	13	1	T & TA	1
Y2	10	1	T & TA	1
Y3	13	1	TA & TA/ SLT	1
Y4	16	2	T & TA T & TA	2
Y5	13	1	HLTA/ SLT	1
Y6		1	T & SEN TA	1
Y6		1	T	1
Y6		1	T	1
Y6		1	T	1
Total:	96	10	12 Ts 2 HLTAs 9 TAs 3 SEN TAs	15 rooms

CM' outline of the reopening plan continued:

- 19 rooms where pods can be placed
- With just priority groups, 10 rooms are required
- Islington recommend early years pods should be made up of 10 children not 15
- In Nursery 24 children are planned for, made up of "yes" and "unsure" survey responses
- 24th May to submit plan to LBI
- Plan to open to Y6 and Y1, this aligns with other Futurezone schools, no school opening with Nursery unless a Children Centre
- Open to the priority group on 1/6 and then Y1 and Y6 on 8/6.
- Then review by 17/6 for reception capacity, 22/6 reception start
- 1st July if capacity exists Nursery to restart
- Plan differs from Government advice but in line with Futurezone
- Y6 easiest group to social distance, key transition year, group least likely to engage with online learning, high pastoral need in this group, significant need in this year group re: disadvantage and vulnerable
- Why not nursery? Nursery are currently too young to test, settling in experience may be difficult and lead to a risk of parents coming on site and creating a risk to staff, least able to social distance, concerns over government provision for early years, limited to resources that staff can clean, yet to get advice from LBI on the resources that should be in Early Years learning bag, anticipated it won't be as warm and play-based a learning environment as before

- Ideally, we would have brought in reception but serious concerns for reception around social distancing and resource bag
- If reception brought in, 6 pods would be required instead of 4.
- 4 of the adults across the 6 pods would not be teachers
- Both Rec teachers currently shielding
- Year 1 selected as there are 4 pods all with adults leading them who the pupils know.
- Y1 less risk on social distancing, walking in straight lines etc
- 1st and 2nd June will be an inset day to cover all processes and preparation for re-opening
- Open to priority group on 3/6
- Y1 and Y6 in Mon to Thurs, with Friday being planning prep and assessment for teachers. This time allows staff to consider the online education of those not in school.
- In nearly all classes will have 2 members of staff, to allow staff to have a break
- Plan will use in total 15 rooms
- If capacity increases there are 4 additional rooms that could be used

Questions from Governors

A Governor - Why are starts being staggered? We have enough rooms to have Y1, Y6 and Reception back, why are we going against Government advice?

CM – We are trying to stick with guidance from the Government as far as possible, important to acknowledge all other FZ schools are doing the same thing. We cannot underestimate how important it is to provide as safe a space as possible for staff and pupils. LBI are backing the decision.

A Governor - We need to consider what education is, EYFS is primarily about social interaction

A Governor - some other EYFS settings are not limiting social interaction within pods

CM- Unison and GMB saying TA should not be leading groups. We need to assure staff as well. Need to safeguard staff and pupils as far as possible.

A Governor – who will be doing the cleaning?

CM - Additional cleaner for 3.5 hours per day, every room has a detailed cleaning list and rota. Staff will not be asked to do general cleaning. Each year group will have a hygiene point with wipes and antibacterial gels

A Governor - Who does the testing?

CM- It's at the discretion of the individual to get tested, not a service delivered by LBI

A Governor - Who provides the PPE training?

CM – LBI have sent through a video . PPE allowances have been put in place

A Governor – Do teachers feel safe, are the distancing measure adequate?

CM – In the consultation, staff felt more safe and reassured to bring in Y1 and Y6 and voted such

Staff Governor – It's very difficult to social distance based on having been in the school recently with the priority children. It's difficult to feel safe, not sure any of us can feel completely safe. People feel this is the safest it can be.

A Governor – Feels comfortable provided the staff feel the plan is as safe as it can be.

A Governor – Do we know if any other schools are taking a 4 day approach? As we open for other years will it increase to a 5 day week?

CM – Those who are not having a 4 day week are relying on basic resources for home learning. If we are continuing to offer online tailored home learning then we will need to operate as a 4 day week.

A Governor – I support staff having the time to facilitate learning for those unable to return.

LF – This is a phased return

CM- Other Futurezone schools opening on 8th June not the 1st June.

A Governor – Do we have capacity to continue offering an online learning provision for those who are unable to return?

CM- Staff who are classed as working at home will add to the provision of online-learning,

LF- We are planning to maintain home learning and anticipate that the level of communication between teachers and children will decrease as teachers will be teaching Mon to Thursday. Also planned for some contact time between teachers and Y6 shielding children via telephone or online video-conferencing

A Governor – Concerned workload will double for staff who have to teach in school and plan for online learning.

LF- Staff will use Friday to plan online learning for the following week

A Governor - How do we get to a point where staff have greater assurance in relation to safety?

CM- Important for staff to come back and see the procedures and become more comfortable with the way of working.

Staff Governor – Quality of online provision has been very good and this is why Friday planning sessions are important. In relation to feeling safe, there will always be a level of anxiety among staff. Staff have demonstrated confidence in leadership and gone against union advice. The trust for leadership is the assurance that staff have.

A Governor - Re EYFS, presumably the government recommendation is considering (at least in part) the economy especially in relation to getting parents back to work. My understanding is that we are representing the interests of childrens' education. Whilst the economy/parents impact to work clearly has an impact on wellbeing, it's not surprising to me that we would reach a different conclusion than the government. It seems unclear to me what's best for nursery children (home vs nursery), but if it's clear that older children will benefit from school but only if we can provide sufficiently high quality... taking away resource to get nursery children back is arguably not in the best interests of children overall.

A Governor – Government advice may also be sensitive to the vulnerabilities of young children particularly EYFS. If lockdown for that group can be shortened then it should be a priority.

CM- Keen to access the information on the increased vulnerability of EYFS who are more dependent and less able to raise concerns.

A Governor – Concerned that a higher percentage of vulnerable children’s parents have indicated they are not returning to school. Can we analyse this by looking at percentage of FSM returning?

CM- Confirms this group is of greatest concern. Becky Wright has had multiple conversations with parents to encourage and reassure them, bring those children in the vulnerable group back to school. Analysis of FSM, Pupil Premium has taken place.

LF – Highest proportion of FSM are in Y6.

RM – Summarises that we have plans in place to proceed with bringing children and staff back to school safely. Some challenges on the ordering and staggering of year groups. The main reason for the staggered approach is to maintain the confidence of staff.

CM- Indicates this is also to validate the logistics

A Governor - Challenge from the governors on the balance of numbers of children coming back. Is it a uniform approach for Y1, Y6 and EYFS or will there be more liberal approaches in other schools. Can we investigate how EYFS is being considered outside of schools eg in local children’s centre nursery settings? Is there any scope to bring those dates forward and minimise the impact on children’s education and maintain staff, children and parent confidence?

CM- indicates there is a lot of work to do in order to plan the entry of reception and nursery age groups, to justify the time delay in staggering

A Governor - Staff have worked very hard over the last period

A Governor - Trusts staff that they know the children and school and what will work best but if it can happen earlier then that would also be positive.

A Governor - feels great urgency required and other risks outside of the virus should not be ignored.

A Governor - We need to have some urgency and not deprive children of an education but also may need a phased return as we move towards the new normal.

A Governor – Has not been convinced the deviating from the government’s guidelines have been justified.

LF – Indicates the school are only deviating from the ordering of the return.

RM – Vote on the plan to reopen

A Governor - What happens if the government’s tests are not met and if the re-opening is delayed?

CM- If it’s postponed by 2 weeks we maintain this plan if its postponed by 4 weeks, then we re-assess

RM- If government timelines change, then we can review the plan to reopen at that time.

7 Votes in favour of the re-opening plan, 1 against and 1 abstention

Decision - FGB support the plan presented to re-open

RM- Asked for the Governing Body's consent for the Chair to agree to final plans presented next week as long as not significantly deviating from what has been discussed and agreed at this meeting. All Governors were in agreement with this.