

HOLY TRINITY SCHOOL
GOVERNOR SURGERY NOTES

21 MAY 2020

Attendees:

Tom Avery
Emma Tsangarides
Paula Quiddington
David Powell
Sarah Tyner
Marius Mirt
Sam Murray

1. QUESTIONS RECEIVED

Staffing

Our teacher was in school last week therefore we got minimal input. We were warned of this, though when we heard the majority of pupils were isolating following a couple of cases, we wondered whether this would then free up our teacher's time a bit more? It would have been good to have an update, in the circumstances.

The school apologises for any confusion caused. When teachers are timetabled to be part of the key worker provision, they are expected to be in school. They are therefore not available for additional off-site learning. The school was open for children on the Tuesday of the week in question, and again after a deep clean on the Wednesday.

I am still confused by the staffing levels issues. It appears that one of the reasons the school is struggling with support is in relation to staff members being vulnerable/shielding or living with someone who is vulnerable/shielding. But then the minutes note this group has been set up for home working. How can this be a reason for the staff shortage then?

As the children are in groups of 15 there is a need for additional teachers as well as support staff to work with pupils with additional needs of an EHCP.

Update from Mrs Edge:

Staff workload and staff working hours have increased as staff get to grips with many new tasks and new technology. Among other tasks, staff are planning lesson, reading and checking curriculum resources and new guidance, attending online meetings, making phone calls, sending emails, creating materials for learning, marking work and providing feedback, and undertaking duties related to special educational needs and safeguarding where needed. Staff are at this time also very involved in planning for the school's re-opening. It is difficult to properly explain the vast amount of work required to keep the school running as it is. To change from a school to a remote learning provider is a huge task and requires time and patience from all involved. The SLT are supporting staff on a daily basis and can assure parents that all staff are doing their best.

Online Learning

The section highlighting a significant reduction in home learning and engagement from June is very concerning. If the school hasn't got plans to incorporate Years 2-5 into school they need to be provided with an acceptable level of education. You state that all teachers/TAs won't return due to shielding, can they not manage home schooling? Many of us work full time and do not have time to take over more of a role. Also in the first few weeks of June you don't have all the planned classes back, what are the other teachers/TAs doing during this time?

The SLT have deployed each member of staff to work either at school or remotely. The school has identified that Year 5 is an important year as the children will be transitioning to year 6 and as well as other classes, we have ensured that teachers get additional time each day to support home learning.

We will continue to have one zoom meeting from a member of staff.

Now this week we have had a reduction in zoom calls to only 1 instead of 2 (the previous week). Some parents were expecting and prepared for the same schedule as the week before – it would be good to set expectations, and whether we can expect 1 or 2 a week and maybe even a timetable we can get used to – if possible? 2 Zooms was excellent, and the children gained a lot from them.

Thank you for advice about keeping regular times; the school will feedback to staff. We are glad the Zoom calls are so successful.

As much as the school would like to do more they are limited by available resources and staff capacity. It is also worth stating that there is no expectation from the government that teachers should be providing zoom meetings, and that the school has been doing more than is required by offering one zoom call a week.

In the Government advice (Point 12 - Remote Education during Wider Opening) the suggestion is that schools move to Oak National Academy when schools open. The assumption here seems to be that schools should not have been relying on this platform when schools were for key worker children only (as HT has) - a move to Oak should be something after June. Not that we move from using Oak during March - June, to little engagement from schools from June. Please confirm what exactly you expect this programme to look like e.g. content, interaction from school staff. The majority of children will not be at school and we need clarity and confidence in the schools plans for home learning.

This is a Government recommended initiated resource. Oak National Academy was available from after the Easter Break. The school reviewed the content and as a staff felt this was a comprehensive English curriculum for the situation. Many schools have used the Oak Academy from Easter.

Guidance from the Department of Education states: education settings still have the flexibility to provide support and education to children and young people attending school in the way they see fit during this time. The school will continue to use White Rose, Oak Academy and MyOn as stated in the document. The Government has made it clear that they are prioritising the year groups identified and we will continue to support the children in years 2, 3,4 and 5 .

As previously requested, can we please have a face-to-face virtual parent/teacher meeting with the class teacher, rather than just a report, as otherwise we will have only had one for the entire school year?

We had to take into the staff wellbeing at that point and made a decision to provide written reports based on the attainment for the first two terms as well as progress. Reports take at least four to five weeks to complete from start to finish.

The school will also be offering phone calls from June.,

Bearing in mind 80% of the work is set by other providers e.g. National Academy why is there no time for this?

As per Mrs Edge's update, teachers are doing a huge amount of other work, in addition to running and monitoring the online provision.

Lack of progress over the recent weeks, seem to have reached a stalemate.

The school would ask parents to contact their child's class teacher if they feel that their child is struggling. Home learning does however present many challenges for a number of pupils, and progress is very unlikely to be at a similar rate to school learning.

Lack of interaction with the teacher, Zoom is all well and good but I think we are beyond a bit of chit chat now.

The school believes that it is important for pupils, classmates and teachers to maintain relationships where possible. The purpose of the Zoom meetings are to continue to provide motivation and peer interaction. Zoom is not designed to be a teaching tool, but the school is looking into other options.

We need maths, English classes, if there is someone in the class who is unable to access the internet/ laptop, then how can we facilitate them accessing these lessons, but in the meantime other children cannot be held back.

We have already provided this for many children - please contact the school if there is an issue.

What will the approach be to getting children back into school, what is the school's idealised version of events?

The school has chosen to run half days for the first few days. We will support each child individually and will work with parents to help their child re-adjust.

Unfortunately, if your child is finding it difficult to separate from you, then you may have to think about whether this is the best time for your child to be returning to school. You will not be allowed to enter the school with them as you will be dropping them off at the main entrance.

Very well sending out the grammar school information how is HT preparing or assisting children who should be encourage to take these exams, there is no feedback from school.

The school follows the national curriculum. It does not teach pupils to prepare for grammar school's preparation exams.

In relation to the ‘notes’ – I still think the answer to the question ‘Could the school consider how it can further support families who are not key-workers or vulnerable, don’t have special educational needs or any special requirements?’ is insufficient. The answer doesn’t answer the question – it goes on to talk about key-worker children, when the question was about non-key worker children?

The school will be sending a questionnaire as requested.

What are their plans for creating/developing a remote educational opportunity for children not returning to school or returning part time?

Please see answers to previous questions about home learning.

We have to be realistic that schools won’t be open in a business as usual fashion from September. Home learning will be part of the children’s lives for a while. There needs to be more strategic thinking in how this is planned now. We can’t keep relying on parents with little online lessons from school and having all these same conversations in August and September.

The school has invested a lot of time in investigating and checking online learning platforms and resources, and will be training staff to use an additional online learning platforms. All online learning is and will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

Parent Support

Developing a remote educational structure for the School should be considered a priority. We cannot avoid the fact that it will be much more used in the future. Tech-skilled parents, staff members and any possible resources should be used to help creating that and educate staff how to best utilise the existing meeting platforms. Zoom and Microsoft Teams are widely used across the educational sector and other public bodies so would think GDPR will not be of a concern

This is an excellent point. As briefly mentioned above, the school is now looking into new technology, and realises that it will be an important part of school-life moving forward.

Staff that are self-isolating, shielding with vulnerable family or else and not going to school could be delegated to work on the remote learning plan from home.

We have already discussed expectations with staff.

As one of the parents in year 4 suggested a dedicated parents group could be created from this half term and remote working plan initiated ASAP.

The school is not able to provide parents with the tools and resources to plan and run lessons themselves. See separate update from Mrs Davidson on parental involvement.

Will there be a further poll of parents for a final decision on whether they are sending their children back? If so, when?

We have based our numbers on the current poll. It is entirely up to parents whether or not they decide to send their children back to school.

Update from Mrs Davidson:

The school is constantly looking at how to improve its online provision and staff are accessing training and learning new skills very quickly. The school will share the Department for Education advice on home learning with parents. In brief, it recommends creating a regular routine for learning, with lots of praise and encouragement. The school is aware that some parents are creating their own virtual learning groups online. All staff know how difficult it is for our families at this time.

Communication

Key-worker parents would like a response from the governors related to the way the initial use of key-worker provision was handled. They felt it was inappropriate to be challenged by an unknown ‘safeguarding’ governor and would still like a response to this.

The governors apologise and would like to stress that the course of action was in response to the situation the school found itself in at the time. The school is trying to maintain regular contact with parents who are key workers, and would ask any key-worker parents who are struggling to please contact the school office directly to ask for further help and assistance.

Would like to discuss with SLT why there haven't been parent calls? Early reports are not something parents have requested and quite honestly too late to be useful. Other schools replaced parents evening with parent calls - why could HT not run these ?

Staff have been calling parents since half term (June) and will be offering addition phone calls with the class teacher.

Surveys/engagement. We think it is essential you hear how your online provision and communications are landing -both to make sure teachers time is well spent and children continue to learn.

Thank you. The school will be sending out a questionnaire

Leadership and Visibility

Lack of leadership - engagement from SLT has improved over the last couple of weeks but far from parents' expectations.

There is an ongoing programme to highlight the school's programme, and the decisions of the headteacher and the SLT more clearly.

Year Specific

Assuming year 3 won't return can the school suggest how end of term/ saying goodbye to their teacher is marked? These are important parts of young childrens' lives and they have all done so well over the last few months but we can't forget these milestones.

The school is very aware of the need for all pupils to mark these milestones in some way. It is currently awaiting further advice from the government on when other year groups can return to school.

We have been looking through this week's plans and see it is mainly white rose maths and National Academy for English. Again. Bearing in mind Year 5 are not one of the first years to go back and it's now been nearly 2 months since there were at school, do you have plans to do online lessons with the children and/or have more zoom calls? Also it was not posted until nearly lunchtime on Monday when our class rep had to give her a nudge.

This was set out on the school's home learning page and these are the resources we are using.

Why is there not more engagement. Each child has 30 mins max facetime with their teacher each week - this is not a lesson.

As per the previous answer, Zoom meetings are not lessons, and are not an expectation. The school is however continually looking at ways to improve the online provision for all pupils.

2. SCHOOL REOPENING

Update from Mrs Kimani:

The school has spent a lot of time creating the FAQ document for parents and hope that it answers many of the questions supplied. Schools do not unfortunately receive any information in advance of it being published generally and therefore have to process information and guidance and respond very quickly. In creating the school re-opening document the aim is to give parents as much information as possible on the current plan but the school would ask parents to be patient where possible, as the school responds to what is a constantly changing landscape.

The school plan is based on the school's resources and what is available at Holy Trinity. Other schools may be doing things differently but their plans will be based on their own circumstances and resources. The school is planning for the whole of each year group to attend and will do its best to support children who do not return. Staff will have time in their day for extra online tasks. Staff are learning and developing their IT skills all the time and so are many of our families. Staff are looking at platforms such as Google Classroom to improve our home learning provision.

There will shortly be a system for booking a phone call with a member of staff after school to discuss any queries or concerns and written reports will be sent home soon. The school is working with the local authority to support parents where their Reception, Year 1 or Year 6 child is not attending school.

The school expects that younger children will find it difficult to return to school and adjust to very different ways of working but we will do all we can to make it as easy as possible for them. The school will create bubbles of children so they can learn and play, but all children will be expected to socially distance and we will need parents to help explain this.

Every member of staff in school will teach a class and those at home will have a class or specific tasks. All staff are working and are expected to work. Planning and getting the school ready for re-opening is a huge undertaking.

By what date is the school planning to make the final decision on whether to re-open or not? (The document refer to key tests needing to be satisfied).

Will get confirmation from DfE

Once children begin to go back, and after the initial period of part time attendance, how many days a week do you anticipate children will be at school for?

Our intention is 5 days, however this may not be suitable and will be reviewed.

If parents choose not to send their children back, will teachers still review and comment on their work on tapestry?

Please see the school's reopening FAQ sheet.

Key worker children - how are the times going to work ie pick up and drop off? With Key workers not having flexibility over when they work there needs to be consistency with drop off times that work for KW's. Will breakfast and after school club be open?

As above.

The Government has highlighted its intention for all primary school children to experience a month of schooling before the end of the term. There is no detail of this in the plan, can you please confirm what the schools intentions are?

As above.

Some would like there to be clearer guidance on what everyone should do should there be an outbreak. Clearly, it was a difficult situation to manage and resulted in multiple telephone calls and updates. Mostly they want to be reassured that now everyone knows what to do, and the advice is accurate. One of our parents wants to be reassured that the correct guidance for households of children who were in with the children who tested positive was shared with all families affected – in the end? From our parents who are key workers – it seems it was not? So, for the children who return to school and the key worker kids, what is the official drill should a child develop symptoms and / or a confirmed case? Another parent feels it is not for school to advise, but to circulate the relevant and accurate DfE guidance.

We will follow the Guidance.

Is the school actively planning on other years returning to school? What does this look like?

Please see the school's reopening FAQ sheet.

I want to understand what their strategy is if children do not go back to school until September, there should be a rolling strategy.

Please see the school's reopening FAQ sheet.

Will children be held back to repeat the year?

The school has no information on this point. The Department for Education will give guidance soon, we hope.

Given the governments ambition is to bring all students back in for a month of school before the end of term there isn't anything in the consultation document referencing that?

Please see the school's reopening FAQ sheet.

Do they started planning for September 20 reopening, when will we have this presented, will they consider/obtain parents opinions on that?

The school has no information on plans for September as yet.

Has Holy Trinity been planning for the school to reopen before the government announcement or was it assumed it would not happen until September?

The SLT and the governors have been preparing to run the school with an increased number of pupils for some time.

Will peer dynamics be considered when putting together the bubbles? Hopefully the children will be able to reconnect with their friends. Also, some children simply do not get along & this has caused huge disruption in the classroom in the past. This will be very important to avoid especially with the new safety measures.

As much as possible within a group of fifteen and with the staff available.

Are the bubbles in the usual form group (e.g. Y6E bubbles & Y6G bubbles)?

Not yet known.

What happens if a child gets sick at school (especially if showing Covid)?

The school will follow the Department for Education guidelines.

Will there be an emergency contact if a child gets ill with Covid symptoms over a weekend so the school can know right away (and can let the bubble know to look out for symptoms)?

No.

Will parents be asked to take their child's temperature before going to school each morning?

The school will follow the Department for Education guidelines.

If there's a Covid case in another bubble, will the families who are in other bubbles also be told?

The Department for Education guidelines suggest there is no need to inform parents in this eventuality.

3. PARENT SUPPORT/FEEDBACK

We would really like school to reach out to parents and ask what is working well and what is not so good (for those at home and not in the risk categories). We think this should be a priority, but if you are suggesting this is beyond capacity, we could run this ourselves, through our parent reps and feedback to individual teachers? We think it is essential you hear how your online provision and communications are landing - both to make sure teachers time is well spent and children continue to learn.

Thank you for this. The school will take this into account when making the questionnaire.

4. OTHER QUESTIONS

In terms of teachers marking - we were encouraged NOT to send in work for marking - is this still the case?

The governors apologise for any confusion caused. Parents are asked to submit work online to be marked, but the school would ask parents not to upload a large quantity of additional work (and work not set) where possible.

How to parents request calls?

Please email the school office.

What is it envisaged are discussed/acceptable topics for discussion in phone calls?

Progress and attainment for Autumn and Spring.

Will the teachers call families if they are concerned about progress or do the parents need to initiate this? Sometimes teachers see more than parents do.

Teachers will (and have been) contacting parents if they are concerned about pupil progress. If a teacher has not been in touch but parents are worried about their child's progress, the school would ask parents to contact class teachers outlining their specific concerns.

I'm very sorry but I'm still not sure why the teachers who aren't in school can't support home schooling.

As per the earlier answer, teachers who are not in school are doing a range of tasks above and beyond online learning. The school's online learning programme is a priority, and will hopefully improve over time.

Oak and White Rose do not need checking by teachers as like you say they have already been checked on a national level so im sure teachers wouldn't waste time checking again

Why are they vetting an online content approved by the DfE to use during this crisis.

All content has to be checked by teachers before it is set, regardless of where it is sourced or who has approved it.

Can provision be made once a week (Friday, eg) for Years 2, 3, 4 and 5? Nursery, reception, Y1 and Y6 would then stay at home at this day.

The school is following the Department for Education guidelines as much as it can. Only pupils in nursery, reception, years 1 and 6 are allowed to return to school, and Holy Trinity is struggling to accommodate those pupils currently.

On polling - does that answer mean there will be no further poll, and the school will just wait to see who shows up on the first day a year is supposed to come back?

The school has separately contacted every family.

What is the learning provision for children who can return to school but decide not to e.g. N, R, Y1, Y6

Please see the Q&A document.

The real problem is time for many parents - I have spoken to a lot of very stressed parents who are trying to work and keep their jobs and help their children, What is the school's advice for these parents?

The school understands the difficulties that so many parents are facing at this time, but it has to be honest and realistic about the support it can provide. At this moment in time its focus is on those pupils who can return to school, but it is continually monitoring and trying to improve its online provision to better help parents.

Why is there no consistency in online learning across year groups?

Teachers are dealing with a varying and constantly changing workload which means that some teachers have more time to dedicate to online learning than others. The school is looking to support all teachers in providing online learning to ensure a level of consistency across all year groups.

Putting resources in place for 100% of children of classes on -site when you have evidence this is unlikely seems strange, maybe 80% max? So as to free up resources to the majority of children who are at home?

Regardless of the responses of parents the school has to prepare for all pupils to return as a precaution. The school is expecting 95% of year 6 to return before the end of the month.

Is there a date for parents to receive the reports?

After half term.

What about doing half days to provide more capacity when the other years return instead of combining bubbles - is that an option?

Yes.

Can we find out who will be supporting each class?

Unfortunately not.

White Rose is too hard for some children.

Please contact your child's teacher if your child is having difficulty with the online resources.

