



Colne Valley Local Schools Board (LSB)

Date: Monday 25 January 2021

Time: 5pm

Virtual details: Meeting held by MS Teams

Clerk: Elizabeth Murphy

Quorum: One half of the numbers of the LSB rounded up which must not be less than three

LSB Members

Other attendees:

Cathy Shergold (Chair)	
Emma Flin, Head of St Andrew's Primary, Great Yeldham	
Julie Sarti, Head of Colne Engaine Primary	
Danielle O'Connell, Head of Belchamp St Paul Primary	
Kirsty Stuart, Head of Ridgewell Primary	
Claire Kearney	
Godfrey Evans (Vice Chair)	
Nigel Benwell	
Richard Hopkins	

Minutes: Spring 1

No	Agenda Item	Action
1	<p>Welcome and Opening Prayer</p> <p>Members were welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made. It was agreed that the meeting could be recorded, which would be deleted once the minutes had been agreed by the Chair.</p>	
2	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>None.</p>	
3	<p>Declaration of Pecuniary and Business Interests</p> <p>No business interests or conflicts of interest were noted nor had any gifts or hospitality been received.</p> <p>It was unclear whether members had completed business interest forms which were required by the trust so it was agreed that these would be issued and then completed and returned to the clerk.</p> <p>ACTION 1</p>	All and Clerk

Business

4	<p>Elect a Vice Chair</p> <p>Godfrey Evans had been nominated for the role and members agreed that he</p>	
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	should be appointed as Vice Chair with immediate effect until the first LSB meeting in the autumn term of 2022.	
5	<p>Chair's Update/Governance Matters</p> <p>The Chair explained that the Colne Valley LSB was the largest in the trust with four schools and all being small rural schools they shared many of the same values and diverse challenges, including the national funding model disadvantages. Good strong relationships already existed with a wealth of shared knowledge which would prove invaluable in providing support to one another ahead. The group provided the opportunity to share difficulties and be creative in ideas to achieve measurable and effective solutions. Members agreed with these sentiments and noted that the LSB needed to work hard to make a success of this new approach to ensure it benefited all concerned.</p>	

School Improvement

6	<p>Update on Impact of Covid-19: attendance/recovery strategy/staff and pupil wellbeing and safety</p> <p>(a) Belchamp St Paul</p> <p>Attendance was 96% in the autumn term with no Covid-19 cases. There were currently 16 children in school which equated to 23% (only 69 presently on roll), 4 of which children were vulnerable, the rest were key worker children. 95% of children were engaged and the school was in regular contact with the 3 or 4 that were not. The Head was the only teacher in school but was supported by 3 teaching assistants (TAs) and were in 3 bubbles: UK2, LK2, KS/EYFS.</p> <p>There were daily assemblies to support children's well-being and staff were in close contact via a WhatsApp group.</p> <p>(b) Colne Engaine</p> <p>Attendance in the autumn term was high at around 90% until a bubble was closed because of a positive case of Covid-19, this then dropped off to just under 50%. Online lesson attendance was around 98%, with just 2 children not at all lessons due to internet issues. The recovery strategy had been working well before the latest lockdown whilst maintaining a rich curriculum and details were provided. There was a big focus on learning to learn skills and staff ensured the collective worship focused on the school's core values and BEN learning skills.</p> <p>Staff were encouraged and had the opportunity to share anxieties and to talk and the WhatsApp group was working well which was helping wellbeing. Goodwill messages from parents and governors, flowers from the local Vicar and a tin of chocolates from the CEO all helped morale and wellbeing.</p>	
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The Risk Assessment was constantly under review and all staff were encouraged to actively let the Head know how they felt about any changes. It was important to note that the context of every setting was different but the Head had managed to keep a number of staff in which was supporting them to feel safe and looked after. Teachers and TAs not scheduled to be in school were working from home.

There were only 7 or 8 pupils in each day. Two families had experienced losses or family members were in hospital. Two staff members had tested positive since Jan and one had a husband in hospital too although they were gradually recovering.

(c) Ridgewell

At the end of the autumn term attendance was 96% and no positive Covid-19 cases so no bubbles had to close. Currently there were 14 regular key worker/vulnerable children attending, some only attended part of the week due to parent's shift patterns, but there was never less than 9 in on any one day.

MS Teams had an attendance feature which showed those joining meetings was around 88%, teachers monitored this and shared details at staff meetings. Any concerns were reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Staff were encouraging all pupils to keep up their reading as part of the recovery strategy and teachers had set extra challenges online. Calculations in maths were being regularly re-visited. The priority was to keep children and families engaged with the work as much as possible and connect with them as often as possible.

Pupils' wellbeing was supported through at least one PSHE/wellbeing session a week across the school and activities were described. Collective worship opportunities were provided daily and twice weekly these were supported by church.

CPOMs was being used to share sensitive information about families and FAST (Family & schools together – 12 families) was continuing to keep in touch with 9 of the most vulnerable families during lockdown with feedback to the Head weekly. Parents also required reassurance about how well they were supporting their children. The DSL was due to attend LA training the following day.

Staff had weekly MS Teams meetings and connected in between to support each other's wellbeing. A screen-free Friday afternoon was being introduced to encourage time away from devices to provide benefits for all. Activities were planned and siblings in different classes would be encouraged to work



	<p>together on the same activity. All staff working in school were in slightly less than their usual timetable and some support staff were highly anxious about being in school. The office was covered every morning to support families requiring paper packs etc. and provided another reassuring voice to parents. The plan was to ensure that there were no more than 4 adults in school at any one time.</p> <p>The trust and LA were supporting the school well.</p> <p>(d) Yeldham</p> <p>Attendance in the autumn was 97% although this rapidly decreased at the end of term due to the need to close several bubble groups. Currently there were 15.3% (26) of pupils in school although day to day numbers varied. Every family received at least one call a week if their child was using the online learning platform. Where a family was not engaging contact was made through two calls a week/front door visits; no one was off the radar.</p> <p>The recovery strategy was expected to be similar to the one followed in September although staff had a much clearer idea of how children were keeping up with the work set this time. Gaps in understanding would be identified again early on when they returned and the Y6 catch-up program would start and Y1 plan begin, which had been prepared for this month.</p> <p>Staff and pupil wellbeing appeared to be good although parent wellbeing varied. A member of staff was conducting welfare calls and reporting back weekly on whole school mood, general feeling towards Google Classroom and parent feedback on ways in which the school could improve. Weekly staff meetings were held. The parish council presented a Costa coffee for all adults. The Risk Assessment constantly changed and weekly staff meeting checked in to see if staff felt safe at work. Routines and roles were changed whenever required to make the model fit demand.</p> <p>One member of staff was on long term sick and one was on reduced hours as part of rehabilitation after a long-term sickness absence. The Head dropped-in on classes online daily.</p>	
7	<p>Approaches to remote learning, pupil engagement, highlights and issues</p> <p>Members Comments:</p> <p>Members asked Heads to specifically identify in their updates where the curriculum had been adapted or areas dropped due to the children engaging through remote learning.</p> <p>(a) Colne Engaine</p>	



It was again important to note that each school may have taken a different approach to remote learning based around individual contexts, putting the best model in place to suit needs and to play to strengths and confidences of those delivering the learning. Colne Engaine used 3 live Zoom sessions of learning a day for KS2 and 2 for KS1 classes. Each lasted 25 minutes and they were carefully timetabled to mean that siblings could get online at the right time even if relying on only one device. Two class adults were online together using chat to help etc. Responding to parent feedback home learning timetables and packs were issued on the Friday before the following week, with hard copies left outside to be collected for those who had requested them. Meeting the needs of one child that had temporarily moved to Blackpool was explained.

Learning largely followed the planned curriculum for the term. The school was aware of any curriculum gaps and had plans to fill these. The RSE lessons usually delivered in the spring term were now scheduled for the summer. Staff were mindful of the need to adapt approaches to live learning based on the needs of the children and a few were receiving some extra one-to-one sessions. It was explained how work was organised for the children and how feedback was provided. There were two PE lessons a week and three collective worship sessions for the whole school including one with the local vicar. Children in school accessed the same live lessons, supported by TAs in school. WOW and ERICER awards continued by post.

Pupil engagement was good at 96-98% attending every lesson. Where needed teachers had provided one-to-one sessions or worked with parents to overcome issues. An online code of conduct around the use of chat, mute buttons etc had been introduced. Parent feedback was very encouraging and really positive with two sending excellent accounts to Ofsted. The few small issues that had arisen were down to anxiety and trying to juggle working from home with schooling and empathy and understanding had solved this so far.

There had been a few issues with technology at times but the Head expressed how proud she was that staff had risen so amazingly well to the challenges faced. Anxiety and exhaustion were of greatest concern.

(b) Ridgewell

Remote learning was through live and recorded sessions daily and tasks to encourage independent learning were provided for subjects across the curriculum. The Head joined the live MS Team meetings whenever possible and had complete oversight of learning on the Seesaw platform and could monitor and/or comment on work.

Pupil engagement was good with 88% of the school accessing online learning. Those that were not engaged were from three traveller families (6 children),



one awaiting wifi, and all have been provided with paper packs of work. One disadvantaged child had been offered a place in school and was due to start the following week. Staff were supporting families, especially where engagement was low, and followed up any concerns as necessary. Teachers were going above and beyond in some instances by providing extra MS Teams meetings for those struggling and providing individual work for some children.

Timetables were used to help families manage the work set and the maths curriculum had been changed around from fractions, where it was felt that parents might not have the confidence to support this, to a different more manageable topic instead. The parent consultation for RSE had been moved to after half term with plans to deliver this in the summer term. The head was confident that a broad curriculum was being provided to the children.

(c) Yeldham

There had been excellent uptake for remote learning due to long term planning with training provided for the children, parents more confident in supporting them and the development of work which was varied and creative. Live teaching sessions, daily Zoom and video lessons had all improved the offer and the Head had access to drop-in during the day. All work submitted was acknowledged and the school constantly responded and adapted to ways of working based on parent and staff feedback where needed. Each child was to receive a resource pack and postcards were sent to children working extra hard to keep them engaged. Three out of five classes had 100% engagement although this did fluctuate.

RSE was being delivered following a consultation in September and was being embraced. Christianity was the focus for RE rather than exploring other religions with families supporting teaching. There were daily workouts and worship four times a week pre-recorded and on Google Classrooms plus one class assembly a week.

About 3% of children had not engaged in Google Classroom or paper resources and were the school's hard to reach children but they were engaging in phone calls from teachers and no child was off the radar. These children were also SEND.

(d) Belchamp St Paul

The school was currently following the curriculum although DT, some areas of science and RSE were not covered. Computing was working well with good resources available online. Each day there were live maths and English learning, plus two foundation subjects and assemblies. The Head explained how the work was organised across the day, with adjustments made following parent feedback to help them manage, using White Rose, BBC and Oak



	<p>National Academy resources to support learning. The key to retaining pupil engagement was to work with parents wherever possible to help and encourage them. The learning platform provided good communication channels and allowed children to interact with staff during the day and lots of one-to-one support was provided too. Children could not be expected to upload all of their work and so specific items were requested. It was recognised that it was still early days and they hoped that they would be able to keep the up the momentum.</p> <p>Technical issues had generally been overcome although two families had problems with wifi and so a workaround had been organised.</p> <p>(e) Members Comments and Questions</p> <p>Members commented that the DfE had no idea of the scale of the work involved by schools in engaging, supporting and working with parents.</p> <p>Members questioned what progress children were making, numbers that were falling behind and if there were how the gaps were being filled or if there were plans to do this later. Tracking of attainment and progress could only be clearly identified once children were back in school but it was thought that the gap would be less than before. It was difficult to judge the extent of parent input too which was varied. Evidence from Tapestry used in Reception would provide some evidence.</p> <p>Members questioned what contingency plans were in place to cater for the lockdown being in place longer term. Heads felt that whilst teaching of some areas of the curriculum might be delayed until the children were back in school, if it became necessary a workaround could be found to deliver this online. Where in previous lockdowns teaching was about consolidation of learning this time following experience of the systems being used they were now able to move the children forwards. It was clear that remote learning was in no way as effective as face-to-face teaching and however staff might try this was an unavoidable fact. Whilst contingency plans were in place no one nationally was clear about when lockdown might be eased due to the ever-changing nature of the pandemic and so adjustments would have to be made once the way forward became clearer. The biggest pressure for schools would be bringing back mixed year groups and therefore mixed year classes in small schools as staff would be required to support them remotely and face-to-face and it might be difficult to maintain the quality of provision.</p>	
8	<p>Focus on vulnerable and SEND children</p> <p>Members requested that Heads include details of whether children were receiving the same quality of provision online compared with those in school. Also, whether provision had had to change and if so how.</p>	



(a) Ridgewell

Traveller children had been disadvantaged again by this lockdown. There were 5 families (9 children from the site – 14% of school). Three traveller families had been given government devices to enable them to access class meetings and the learning platform, and two of these families were now fully engaged with remote learning, however, one was still struggling and awaiting a government wifi package so using books and other resources in the interim. Two families had turned down the devices, although it was unclear why, and had opted for paper packs instead. One family had lost two grandparents over last the month so the Head was carrying out a doorstep visit once a week with additional phone calls. The other family had been offered a place in school for an SEN child, although the mother had recently tested positive for Covid-19 so paper packs had been provided in the interim. Plans were to work with this child in school on IT confidence. The Head of Colne Engaine wished to recognise the Head of Ridgewell's achievement in being accepted and developing good relationships with the traveller families which had been a huge obstacle to overcome and was congratulated for this.

The SENCo had worked hard to arrange a timetable of small group meetings through MS Teams to continue to deliver the catch-up interventions that had been organised in November. She had also supported parents pastorally and many had chosen to stay on online meetings to speak to her after their child's session and this was working well. The SENCo had developed a gap funding plan for SEN disadvantaged children and work on this had continued and would do so through to the end of the summer term whether the children were in or out of school. All children on the SEN register (apart from the two traveller families mentioned) were having extra support throughout the week. Following the recent delivery of some new IT equipment the children in school were now able to join the teacher's online lessons so classes were experiencing a good quality curriculum together.

Forest schools was being reintroduced in school for the children on the screen-free Fridays and other well-being activities would be taken advantage of due to the small numbers involved.

(b) Yeldham

All vulnerable children were now in school plus all those with EHCPs except one who had work at home and was getting additional support. Safeguarding remained a high priority and took up an enormous amount of time but the Head felt that they were meeting the needs of these children well. They were following the online provision with their teacher and it was explained how this was organised for their benefit.



Staff had worked exceptionally hard and were devoted to ensuring the online provision worked as well as it could, although it was stretching them to extreme lengths at times, and if there was an expectation that this might have to be ramped up at all there was concern as to whether staff would be able to cope with any further pressure. The provision in place had been well thought through and was already of excellent quality and it was unclear how this could be improved. This was also reflected by the level of engagement seen from the children.

(c) Belchamp St Paul

Teachers were delivering live lessons from home whilst the TAs were in school supporting the children. Most of the SEND and vulnerable children were in school although two or three families preferred to keep them at home despite the school's encouragement to get them in. These were monitored closely especially with regard to safeguarding and regular calls were held with some parents that needed reassurance. Emotional and pastoral support was provided to children and parents if needed and this included home visits where necessary.

The SENCo had reviewed all the One Plans and needs had been flagged with staff and it had been agreed how the plans could be adapted and needs could be met now and longer term, and examples were provided.

Broadly the children in school were getting the same exposure to their teachers as those using remote learning and the Head joined some of these and held Zoom teaching sessions herself. Forest schools was being offered to all the KS1 children in school and they all had some time away from screens for their well-being.

Of the 23% (70) of children in school 75% of these were key worker children and 25% were vulnerable.

(d) Colne Engaine

The Head felt that much of the work to assist SEND and vulnerable families was providing much needed and varied support to keep households stable and examples were provided.

Some not all vulnerable children were in school. One vulnerable child was not in school as the father was shielding and a variety of ways were used to check in on them and other vulnerable families. There were no families with social care involvement but regular welfare calls and checks with families were provided and staff advised the Head when a child did not attend a lesson so



	<p>this could be followed up. The welfare register was kept updated. Extra support was provided where needed and several examples were provided.</p> <p>Of the two children with EHCPs one was extremely clinically vulnerable and the other was not in school so in addition to access to the usual lessons provided they had two extra live bespoke lessons with TAs to help them catch up and extra resources sent home where needed.</p> <p>Due to the small number of vulnerable children in school they were benefiting from the teaching of learning, resilience and stamina skills which was easier to achieve in smaller groups.</p> <p>One Plans had been reviewed and examples of how needs could be met whilst children were learning from home were provided.</p> <p>Access to learning was the same in school as remotely and so provision was equitable.</p> <p>Members felt that the support that was being provided had been well thought through and was excellent and Heads were thanked for the detailed explanations provided.</p> <p>(e) Members Comments and Questions Members wanted to know whether the external agencies schools used e.g., social care, the police etc were providing the same level of support as usual. One school felt that more involvement from social care had been seen whereas another felt that Family Solutions were probably overstretched and so had not responded well. Suffolk County Council was responding more quickly than Essex County Council for one school. Two of the schools had not needed this support so could not comment. Many SEN professionals were not available as they had been called back to work in medical settings and so this expertise was lacking.</p>	
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Final Business

9	<p>Communication to/from the Vine Trust Board The Chair had been involved in discussions with the CEO and the Vine LSB Working Group on governance restructuring since December 2019. The Head of Colne Engaine had also been invited to the next LSB Working Group on 12 February so feedback from that would be shared in due course. The Chair was to attend the next Vine Trust Board meeting on 2 February and if any members wished for any comments or questions to be raised these could be sent to her.</p> <p>ACTION 2</p>	All
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	The information to be recorded centrally about members was still unclear and would be clarified in due course.	
10	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>(a) Individual Responsibilities</p> <p>Members discussed and agreed responsibilities in line with the Terms of Reference as follows:</p> <p>Church School Effectiveness - Richard Hopkins</p> <p>Safeguarding - Cathy Shergold and Claire Kearney</p> <p>SEND – Cathy Shergold</p> <p>Quality of Education and School Improvement – Godfrey Evans, Richard Hopkins, Claire Kearney and Nigel Benwell</p> <p>Compliance – Nigel Benwell (clarity on the scope of compliance was required)</p> <p>ACTION 3</p> <p>(b) Non-Pupil Dates for 2021-22</p> <p>These would be provided to the Clerk and added to these minutes (see below).</p> <p>ACTION 4</p> <p><u>Great Yeldham</u></p> <p>1 Sept 21</p> <p>22 Oct 21</p> <p>4 Jan 22</p> <p>11 Feb 22</p> <p>19 April 22</p> <p><u>Colne Engaine</u></p> <p>1st Sept 21</p> <p>1st Nov 21</p> <p>4th Jan 22</p> <p>21st Feb 22</p> <p>22nd July 22</p> <p><u>Ridgewell</u></p> <p>1st Sept 21</p> <p>1st Nov 21</p> <p>4th Jan 22</p> <p>21st Feb 22</p> <p>22nd July 22</p> <p><u>Belchamp St Paul</u></p> <p>1st Sept 21</p> <p>1st Nov 21</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Heads</p>



	<p>4th Jan 22 21st Feb 22 22nd July 22</p> <p>(c) LSB Documentation Members asked how documentation would be shared between the LSB members in future. An MS Sharepoint portal would be set up and everyone advised accordingly. ACTION 5</p> <p>Members agreed that they would need to see each school’s SEF, School Development/Improvement Plan and Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR), although it was recognised that whilst the data would be limited it would provide some context.</p> <p>(d) School Website Compliance Members asked whether schools had added to their websites details of their online provision as this was a DfE requirement by 25 January, and this was confirmed. Heads were reminded that it was now a requirement to have information on the website about the use and impact of “catch up funding”.</p> <p>(e) LSB Communication The Chair asked that members copy her in on any emails where discussions with other trust members were being held so that she was kept updated and could respond to any subsequent questions that might arise. ACTION 6</p> <p>A Vine Trust email address was required for Richard Hopkins and this would be arranged. ACTION 7</p> <p>The Clerk agreed to share with members the LSB standard agenda that she had received. ACTION 8</p> <p>Members agreed that meetings needed to have a focus and to cover areas such as school improvement, church school effectiveness, finances, IT etc and so suggestions were requested and to be sent to the Chair and Vice Chair. ACTION 9</p>	<p>Chair</p> <p>All</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>All</p>
11	<p>Date and Time of Future Meetings Meetings were to be held by MS Teams for the time being at 5.30pm on: 2 March</p>	



	20 April 22 June	
	Closing Prayer The meeting closed with a prayer.	

The meeting closed at 7.20pm

Drafted: 270121

Issued: 010221 (inc. Trust)