

BANISTER PRIMARY SCHOOL
MEETING OF THE FULL GOVERNING BODY
THURSDAY 14th JANUARY 2021

9.00 AM

MINUTES

Those Present:

Kate Vincent (Head Teacher)
Peter McBride (Chair)
Dave Hockin
Marion Clelland
Samantha Clough (joined during item 3)
Cllr Steve Leggett
Peter Davison
Richard Congreve
Romana Syed
Luke Newman
Vicky Boothman
Megan Streb
Christina Spiers
Vivek Kohli

Apologies: Laura Racioppi
Matthew Turpin

Absent: None.

In attendance:

Katie Pevreall (Clerk)

Notes:

1. Welcome, Present and Apologies

1a. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Christina Spiers, the new parent governor. It was agreed that Vivek Kohli would be Christina Spiers' mentor. Apologies were accepted from Matthew Turpin and Laura Racioppi.

2. Declaration of Interest

2a. Governors did not declare an interest in any of the agenda items.

3. Minutes and Actions of the Previous Meeting

3a. All actions from the previous meeting had been completed except the following:

ACTION: PM to find HR training for governors.

3b. The minutes of the previous meeting were signed by the Chair. Samantha Clough joined the meeting.

4. Update on School Plans

4a. Governors thanked the school for the Life Under Lockdown document which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Governors acknowledged the constant changes that the school was having to react to as a result of the pandemic.

4b. The board was informed that the school should have had approximately 90 children in the previous day, however one Y6 bubble had been closed following a positive lateral test. It was noted that the DfE/PHE guidance did not require the school to close the bubble until a positive PCR test had been confirmed but that that school felt it was best the decision.

4c. Schools had received instruction from the government that they no longer need to call the DfE/PHE helpline every time there was a positive case. Individual schools were now able to assess the risk themselves providing that the LA was informed.

Q: Are the numbers of children attending school considerably higher than the first lockdown?

A: It is much higher than at the beginning of the first lockdown, but still a smaller number than the 120 who were attending at the end of the first lockdown.

Q: Has the widened definition of keyworker had an impact on the number of children attending school?

A: The school has had to have some difficult conversations with parents around their critical worker status, however, in general parents have been very understanding. Most parents who are critical workers but who have someone else at home who can help the children with home education have pursued this option.

4d. It was noted that all children who are under the care of a social worker or who are living in a refuge are still attending school. The board was informed that the school could not currently safely accommodate all the vulnerable children they would wish to have in school.

4e. The school noted that all laptops had been given out and as a result the school knew that all vulnerable children had access to a device at home. The online usage of these children was being monitored and the school was regularly checking in with parents over the phone. The school had also been allocated 26 brand new tablets by the DfE however 15 of these devices remained unallocated.

4g. The board was informed that children were generally engaging well with SeeSaw, the online learning platform. The school was aware of a few children who were engaging in different ways, including paper-based learning.

4h. It was noted that the government expected schools to provide four hours of learning per day to KS2, three hours per day to KS1 and fewer for YR. The school had made it clear to parents that the wellbeing of the children and their parents was important and although the school would provide this learning it was up to the parents to decide what they felt was best for their children.

4i. Governors were assured that the food parcels provided by City Catering in place of the free school meal vouchers were well stocked with fresh food. It was noted that only half the parents eligible for the food parcels had claimed them. It was noted that from the following week the voucher system would replace food parcels for those eligible for free school meals. The school informed that board that they had provided some of the school's more vulnerable parents with additional food.

4j. The school was checking in with parents they knew to be struggling on a regular basis. Some parents were struggling with phone calls due to shortness of breath and the school had provided them the opportunity to text a member of staff daily. It was noted that a lot of parents had been affected by Covid-19 and some parents were grieving. It was also noted that provision for children dealing with bereavement had increased in school.

4k. The Chair informed the board of a zoom call he had had with staff. He noted that although staff were already tired, they appreciated the efforts of the Headteacher and the SBM. It was noted that staff felt safe and secure in school. The school noted that they were giving staff regular opportunities to discuss any anxieties they had.

Q: How many staff have tested positive for Covid-19?

A: Two LSAs, one before Christmas and one over the Christmas break.

4l. The board was informed that as of Monday 25th January, the school would test all asymptomatic staff once a week.

4m. The board discussed staff anxieties and the time SLT was dedicating to addressing these anxieties. The school noted that having staff on site had made reduced anxieties at the start of the day in comparison to the first lockdown.

Q: Are families required to let the school know if they have had a positive test in the home if the children are being educated at home?

A: No. The school is only finding this information out when they are in contact with the parents.

Q: Are pupil anxiety levels different to the first lockdown?

A: On face value the children seem to be experiencing little anxiety, much like the first lockdown. However, staff are noticing that children are being more easily affected by small things than they would normally be. Children who have very anxious parents are highly affected by the anxiety of their parents.

4n. It was noted that the school was aware that the children were missing real time contact with their teachers. The school was trying to address this and one teacher, who was working from home, was currently finding the best way for parents to give permission for this to take place via zoom. It was noted that the school did not feel it was appropriate to offer a real time session at the beginning of each day as it would increase the pressure on parents and the school's WiFi would likely not support the activity.

5. Staffing

5a. It was noted that 14 members of staff were currently away from the building for various reasons including self-isolation, being extremely vulnerable and anxiety. The school noted that it was not having an operational impact, however SLT were impacted as a result of looking after the staff remotely.

6. AOB

6a. A consultation regarding the Trade Union facilities agreement had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that if the school opted in the contribution would be the equivalent to approximately £3.60 per child, or £1,400 in total.

Q: If the school opted out, how would this affect the trade unions in the long term?

A: If fewer schools contribute, the result is that it weakens the unions and allows them to support less staff individually and collectively.

6b. It was unanimously agreed that the school should opt in to the payment.

6c. The Chair brought to the attention of the board the High Needs Funding Consultation which had been circulated to schools prior to Christmas. It was noted that the SEND budget in the city was not currently sufficient enough to support high needs and to make up the shortfall the LA was asking for money to be taken from schools' normal budgets. It was noted that the LA could only use money allocated to maintained schools to cover this shortfall, and not money allocated to academies. The school had responded to the consultation and this response would be shared with governors. It was noted the issue had been discussed at the Schools Forum.

6c. It was noted that schools had been presented with three options, option two would mean that Banister would contribute an additional £1,500 in comparison to option three however, under option three other schools in the city would be disproportionately negatively affected. As such, the Headteacher felt that if any option had to go ahead, option two would be the best choice.

Q: Although this problem affects us locally, it is a national problem. How is this being addressed nationally?

A: As a trust, we have requested that the LA start to lobby the government to explain that the shortfall is a result of not getting the budgets they require.

6d. The board discussed the different approach to SEND and High Needs funding by a neighbouring city council.

6e. It was agreed that the previously postponed GP and TLC meetings would take place on the 1st February and 5th of February respectively.

ACTIONS:

Page no.	Item	Action	Person Responsible
1	3a	PM to find HR training for governors.	PM