

## Minutes of the TLOC Committee

Wednesday 7 March 2023

**Present:** Neil Perry, Rosa Mottershead, Christina Bates, Tony Davies (TD), Chris Jagger, Katie Hehir, Aditi VEDI (sent apologies for lateness, arrived at agenda item 6).

Sarah Barratt (SB) attended to present agenda items on pupil premium, SEND and covid catch-up.

**Clerk:** N/A

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Jon Parkin

### **2. Declaration of direct or indirect pecuniary interests relevant to agenda items**

None

### **3. Update re SEND and Pupil Premium Data and Provision**

#### **A. SEND and SEND support data summary**

One administrative issue is that report writing for SEND data is currently difficult, as the software is not ready yet. We are using SONAR already, but it is not fully integrated. By the time we have the data from July, we are hopeful we will have full access to progress data for SEND and PP children.

Qu: is there a problem during the transition – that we can't fully track progress or attainment at the moment?

TD: there was an issue but will be resolved by July. Not a practical issue, as we have accurate data of where the children are. It's just that the reporting is difficult to generate at the moment. We know where our children are.

SB: There is more need than we have ever had before. Covid has magnified need. Moderate need has become higher level, for example. In KS1 we have lots of children who are behind academically but socially and emotionally, our younger children are very different to previous cohorts. They are much less mature in terms of social skills. They are not as ready to learn. These are children who were aged 1 to 2 during the covid lockdowns.

In KS2, we have high levels of anxiety. Much higher than pre-covid. In KS1, the children are less ready to learn than any before, but we are not concerned with underlying cognition and learning in the longer term. They can learn and will be able to do so as they progress through the school. But KS2 SATS next year may be challenging.

SEND children generally are doing ok. They are not where our SEND children were pre-pandemic, but this is not disastrous and is manageable.

The most pressing issues with our SEND children are in year 1 and year 5. Year 5 has been a known concern moving through the school, as it has the highest level of PP children and SEND need. Funding for Teaching Assistants is very tight, so this is challenging. We have already improved as far as we can (in terms of how we use our TAs, how efficient we are, etc.) within the available budget, and there is no clear further margin for improvement here. To really make inroads and

improvements, time is crucial – for more funding to become available, and for the children to progress.

### **Initiatives to tackle problems:**

1. **strategy sheets.** We have introduced Strategy Sheets. These record specifics for the individual children and what helps them learn. SB wrote strategy sheets for each SEND child in the school, to avoid teachers having to spend time here. These make transition between classes much easier, as the class teacher can update this, and provide it to the next year's class teacher. So there is not such a great learning curve for the new teacher.

Qu: are the SEND children evenly spread across the three classes in a year? Not necessarily. Children do not arrive at school with SEND support in place. Sometimes they will have an EHCP, but otherwise this develops with time, as does pupil premium. Can become very unbalanced overtime between classes. Level of need and intervention varies greatly. When we put classes together initially, we review information and educational needs so as to balance the classes, but this changes over time, as needs develop.

2. **Assessments for benchmarking lowest children:** where a child is working two or three years behind, it can be very difficult to accurately level them. We are improving accuracy here.
3. **Work on supporting writing continues.** One of the assistant heads has put a lot of effort into this, and how we are focussing on very low ability writing is getting much better. Teachers are doing a good job here.

We know what we need to do to help our SEND children, and are doing our best, but with very limited resources.

4. **Mental health support team:** the team are running in-school workshops. For parents of children who struggle with anxiety. 6 weeks' of workshops with the support team, to better manage anxiety. Very exciting to run these in school hours. Previously these were online, but now these are in-person we have better commitment from parents.
5. **Old Early Intervention Family Workers:** this helps to refer people for lower level issues. The first drop session in later this month, and then they will run the "raising children" courses.

These are available for all children (not just SEND), but there is a high correlation with SEND children, and also with social and emotional aspects of educational need.

There are waiting lists, and we have to manage these according to our assessment of need.

Qu: is the increased need linked to covid? Yes, and to parents' need from covid and also the cost of living crisis. Covid was lovely for some children, but then coming back to school was challenging. People are also more ready to identify anxiety than previously, but there is an increase in need, definitely.

Also, previous cuts in support and early years intervention and support has had and continues to have an impact.

### **B. Pupil Premium (PP)**

There are 108 PP children in the school. Pre-pandemic we typically had 70-80 children at any one time across the school. Almost a third of these have SEND needs. There is a big overlap, but not as big as in other times. After lock-down, PP had fared better than SEND children, but that is not the

case now. PP progress at this point is significantly lower across the board than pre-pandemic. In 2021, the major issue was with writing. Now it is across all subjects. But if you took out the data for years 1 and 2, it would be less of an issue. We can see that PP and SEND and all children in year 1 are not making as much progress as we would like. It is becoming obvious that PP is more of an issue. It always has been, but more so now.

It will be interesting to see the data in the next few weeks and in July, as there is definitely a learning loss over the summer, so December data is not as good as later in the year. Also, we find that teachers with PP children need to build strong relationships with these children, to encourage and support them. By the end of the year, these relationships are strong and progress has usually improved.

Over the last 5 years, PP children have become a more complex cohort, with more significant family issues. Many are EAL and more disadvantaged EAL than previously. We have more speech and language need in the main school than we have ever had. Partially due to pandemic, but also significant gap in SALT (Speech and Language Therapy) during covid. The major break in this during lockdown has had a huge impact. Usually we have about 3 children in year one and a few over the rest of the school. Now have more in each year than previously. This will take some time to work through.

The most disadvantaged families have struggled the most. There are significantly more children for teachers to focus on. In some classes now there are 7 or 8 PP children to focus on (as well as the rest of the class). This means teachers may not know them as well as they once might have done as there are more children to focus on.

But the most complex families are now PP. We are applying funding and focus on these children, working closely with families to support them as best we can. We are continuing with the “barriers to learning sheets” to clearly identify needs. Early intervention worker means it is now easier to get support for families. We can call the worker and get an immediate response.

**Enrichment** – PP engagement with our after-school clubs, with real support from Lisa Woolf and Julie Murphy, has gone back to pre-pandemic levels (75% or so of PP families attending). We are running homework club again. We will prioritise PP children if needed. Covid catch-up covers PP, SEND and others who have needed it. Katia has been working with maths and writing and has made a difference.

**Attendance** – working with Annabel Lewis on this. It’s a big issue, made worse by covid. It’s a challenge across the country. Last term there were high levels of illness. But if children are not in, they are not accessing learning or help. 29% PP children had less than 90% attendance. 44% had less than 94%. Anything less than 90% is classed as persistently absent. Figures improve over the year, with time, but they are low at the moment. We look at each child and try and see if there is a pattern or understand the reason for absence so we can intervene if necessary.

We set a target a few years ago of getting the 90% rate below 10% of PP children. We have never managed to achieve this, but it is still an aim. We also have mental health issues and school refusal which impact this figure. More than previously, but we are working to find solutions.

One positive note – Cambridge SEND services have created a new website on Learn Together covering SEND provision. Ordinary Available provision. This applies to SEND support children. It is trying to give clarity of what schools should be doing for SEND support. Schools are good with EHCP but not always with SEND support. This may help avoid extra EHCP applications, but it is a website

that gives you info and resources for each type of concern. It's a work in progress that schools can feed into. It also has "how to" guides. Makes this much more accessible for people to find and use information.

Qu: will we advertise this to parents? Yes, once teachers are aware of and have seen it first. So they are not concerned about queries. It is not a list of options, it is information.

Qu: we will have a link governors' meeting in April to look at two terms of data. We have just had an Ofsted inspection at early years at Ross Street and there were lots of questions on PP funds and how these are spent and for whom. We know it's not a purely individualised budget, as provision must benefit PP but may also benefit others who have needs. But do we need to update the website at least for the level of PP funding for this year? Yes, we need to do that and will approve the budget for this at the next FGB meeting.

[SB left the meeting]

#### **4. Data across the school for Autumn (presented by TD)**

Juniper report – lots of data, but it breaks down into a few key messages. Overall, we are performing better than most schools using Juniper. It is important to remember these are teacher assessments (so not so standardised), but the following stand out:

- a. We have a problem in year 1. We knew this from our own data. We expect as this year works through the school, their ability to access learning will improve. We don't know what the consequence will be long term, and nor do other schools.
- b. We are outperforming on most levels, but SEND varies from year to year, and for PP children across the board we are underperforming against local authority and national data. Some of this may be about how we are assessing our lower attaining children. SONAR predicts (or asks teachers to predict) where a child will be at the end of the year, not where they are now. For our lower attaining children, we have instead assessed where they are now, not a look-forward test. We assume other schools haven't done this. We did this in December and will do this again in April. It was felt that was the best approach in this time of transition to ensure we had accurate data for where our vulnerable children are. We worried we would lose track of actually where the children are now. Need to know the child well to feel confident about future learning. This approach pulls down the data in comparison to other schools.

Qu: year 5 current has historically been below on data comparisons with other year groups. Is this showing up in Juniper? We are round about average in Juniper, but they are getting extra maths and other support. Covid catch up has primarily gone into year 5 this year (and they had this at the end of year 4 as well). This is having an impact to improve attainment. We are unlikely to be able to afford this next year, so we hope to get them to a point they no longer need this next year.

Qu: why is year 5 so challenging? A high number of PP (20), SEND (20 – with some overlap) and social emotional and mental health needs across all classes. They went into lockdown in year 2, when they were making progress. And no SATS, so no benchmarking. So it is difficult to see who was secure or not at that point. They missed the summer term in year 2, which is crucial in terms of developing their ability to access learning and secure key concepts. This has been a learning deficit that the school has been working on since. That support has brought the group

up to national averages according to Juniper. If provision is reduced next year, the challenge will be to maintain/improve on this.

There is also a huge amount of good news in the data. We should notice this. We look at the negative because we want to improve, but we are achieving lots of excellent results.

Qu: what about timing? When does the school get the data, and when can it be assessed? We get it in December, start looking and analysing, so we can start working on the basis of the data immediately in the New Year. We have been working based on this for the last two months.

Qu: in year three, there is a relatively big difference between girls and boys data. Do we know why? We don't have an ongoing pattern, but this is something that has been noticed in teaching? It is not characteristic of other cohorts so not suggestive of a wider pedagogic issue, but something that will be monitored.

Qu: is there a consequence for us measuring our low attainers differently to other schools in the Juniper report? No. this data is for our benefit and internal use only.

## **6. Link governor reports for science and maths**

[AV arrived]

Qu: How are we going to implement the recommendations in the science link visit?

TD: We are all aware of teacher pressure and the focus on maths and English.

CB: The shift to knowledge-based curriculum has been detrimental for science. The balance between hands-on experimentation compared to knowledge of key items has shifted, e.g. more knowledge relating to plants has been included. This has been noticed by the children.

Qu: is there any science-based extra curricula? We used to have close links with Parkside on science. We have plenty of visitors into school, etc, but extra-curricular is just that and so not necessarily a universal offer.

In terms of curriculum focus, oracy for example should be a key part of the science curriculum – not an alternative that detracts from science.

TD: this is a key school development plan target – trying to create space in the curriculum. We have made small steps but we need to make more progress. We will review at the end of the year to see how far we have come. This is an ongoing project that will continue next year as we review progress so far. It may be that we need to be more ruthless about reducing some aspects of the curriculum to enable focus on that which we consider to be most important to our aims. We need a deeper look at this, and see what other schools have done to see how to improve this.

Science resources: we collate these every year. We use Plan B.

## **7. Maths link governor report**

Oracy development – this will be beneficial for improving reasoning skills in general.

TD: It is about finding a balance. workbooks are so easy to use, but can get repetitive and boring (for teachers and children) and so it is important to use other resources and methods to complement the underpinning White Rose scheme. Need to create space and time in the curriculum. White Rose

can save time in terms of planning and at times curriculum delivery. It also provides consistency across the school and support for teaching, and prepares children up for SATS.

#### **6. Other updates, curriculum matters**

TD explained they have changed some staff meetings and training days. This will be set out in the updated SDP at the FGB meeting. We have an oracy visit coming up from the consultant.

#### **7. Planned link governor visits**

CJ to do the literacy visit

NP booked in to do PP and SEND visit after Easter

In the summer term, we are due a safeguarding audit.

#### **8. Minutes**

Minutes of the TLOC meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 were reviewed and approved.

#### **9. AOB**

The school needs to update the phonics framework provider, as current provider will be discontinued.

#### **10. Dates for next meetings.**

To be decided by email and at next Full Governing Body meeting.