

Extraordinary Full Governing Body Meeting

Friday 20th March 2015

10am

Present: David Leaity (Chair) , Alex Gardiner (Vice Chair), Dave Gilbert, Martin Mayo, Sarah Parekh, Sarah Yelland, Sandra Heyward, Richard Martin, Jamie Armstrong and Debbie Tregellas.

Apologies: Aleah Truscott, Karen Hearn, Jenny Tyrrell.

The Chair explained that this meeting was called in response to the LA's urgent request that the school accept an additional 30 pupils into Reception in September 2015. He outlined the timescales of recent exchanges with the LA.

The LA have an additional 33 Reception places to find in the St Austell area for September 2015, based on first choice applications and not including any late applications. All the town schools are full and the LA will need to transport pupils to a primary school some 5 miles distant if Pondhu does not accept these pupils.

Pondhu currently have 36 first choice applications for the 30 places available. The appeals process would very probably result in additional pupils being allocated to Pondhu generating the need for an additional class. This is as a result of the school having the second Wernicks classroom as a result of the previously failed expansion plans.

Written comments had been received from AT, JT and KH and were shared at the meeting.

The governors were very disappointed by the short notice and pressure that is being applied to the school to respond within an unreasonably short time scale.

Pondhu is dedicated to providing high quality support for all our pupils and their families; this includes a carefully planned and supportive transition programme. After considerable discussion it was agreed that to manage the additional class most effectively including recruitment of appropriate staff, equipping the room and ensuring induction is thorough the school would agree to the LA request to admit 60 children into Reception in September 2015 subject to the following conditions:

1) Additional Hall Space

Our hall has always been undersized, this was confirmed during the feasibility of the TBN expansion. Since then, we have already added 30 children, current Year 1, and to add a further 30 children is just not possible or practical. The original expansion for Pondhu included a hall expansion and this will need to be in place by September 2015 for us to accommodate the additional 30 children.

2) Additional Infant Playground

As you are well aware, outdoor learning is an intrinsic part of the curriculum we offer at Pondhu. Without adding additional outdoor learning space we will be compromising those principles and we are not prepared to do this. Our proposal will be to utilise the existing staff car park as an extension of our infant hard playground. The car park is adjacent so this would be a practical solution.

3) Additional Car Parking

Primarily as a consequence of 2) but also as a result of an additional 30 young children to be dropped

off and collected, we will need to expand the car parking. We have already discussed with you our proposal to extend the existing car park onto land that in your words "can be gifted to the school by me".

4) Utilising meeting rooms at the Children's Centre

As you are aware, we have a very high proportion of challenging families (>45% pupil premium) and with this comes the requirement to meet frequently with many outside agencies. We have found the additional room within the Wernicks building absolutely essential to facilitate these meetings and a range of family support activities. Without this room we would not be able to provide this critical enrichment for our children and families. We know that what we provide is effective, having been recognised locally and nationally for the positive impact we have provided to these disadvantaged children. The permanent use of a room at the Children's Centre will overcome this issue.

5) Traffic loop around the rear of Pondhu House

At the time of putting in the additional parking it would be helpful to also add in the loop as we have previously discussed.

The governors consider this to be a practical solution as all of the above items are within the control of either the LA or school and would not rely on obtaining anything from a third party. The governors expect the LA to fully fund items 1-5 and for them all to be in place by 1st September 2015. While this is a challenging timeline, the governors consider this to be achievable and a solution to the current places shortfall.

If the LA are unable satisfy these conditions the school would have no alternative than to refuse the admissions.

This was proposed by Alex Gardiner and seconded by Dave Gilbert.
Unanimously agreed by all present.

The meeting closed at 11.15am