

## Written evidence submitted by Mr D Sanderson

I write as a Parent of 2 school aged children (currently in years 5 and 9), and as a Parent Governor.

I am also a Director of a company that supplies educational electronics and materials to schools and other educational settings worldwide. Whilst not directly relevant my role does mean I interact with educationists on a regular basis.

As a Parent I feel that both of my children have received a good selection of lessons from their schools to complete. In general both schools have had, or have created, appropriate IT infrastructure to allow reasonably effective home schooling from the 1<sup>st</sup> week of it being required.

My younger child's primary school was already using some online learning tools as part of their normal schooling, so these have continued to form part of the lessons.

Other lessons have been created and placed on the school website. These often require the printing of worksheets or internet access to watch online videos.

The school has also organised online class meetings, where the teacher and pupils can interact and also complete some schooling - for instance teacher led science investigation into float or sink.

My eldest's secondary school was already using an online homework submission system (Show My Homework) as part of how they operated.

As this was in place for all pupils it has become the method of assigning and marking / feeding back on home schooling work.

There have also been some lessons recorded by the staff on Microsoft Teams - which the school has licenses for, and has provided instructions for accessing.

The school has provided a good amount of lessons, as well as guidance on workload expectations and the ability for pupils to contact the teachers for assistance and support.

As a family we have good internet, plenty of devices, and the ability to print.

Without these remote learning would have been much more difficult.

Both my children have 'grown up' using technology, and were already very comfortable with remote video calls and such - prior to the pandemic they would frequently 'face time' their grandparents and cousins, some of whom live in other countries.

Whilst not being able to physically interact with friends is strange they have apparently adapted quickly to the new ways.

This has certainly been helped because we have good internet access and sufficient devices that sharing is not required. Without technology availability home schooling would have been much more difficult, not least of which is because both my wife and I are able to work from home reasonably effectively, so can supervise and assist as required.

As a Governor I have a lot of faith in the management team of the school to do the best they can.

Overwhelmingly the school staff have the best interests of their pupils and their education at the centre of their decisions. The school is an important part of the local community, and the head has shared the journey throughout with regular letters and updates.

The lack of clear guidance from the DfE has not helped, and has caused a large amount of frustration.

Schools have not been obstructive, but official guidance appears to come from people who have no idea what a school looks like, never mind how one has to operate.

As the Director of a business the official guidance we received was also not very useful, however the constraints we have - with a large building and many fewer staff are much less.

To meet the required health and safety objectives we have the majority working remotely, and limited numbers of people in the building.

To achieve this and ensure the welfare of the staff in a school setting is difficult, and potentially impossible if the school is required to operate 'as normal', with the full cohort of pupils.

We have yet to meet as a governing board to understand what the return in September will actually look like, but the school management team has a much harder job to do than I did as a Director of a business.

With regard to 'lost learning' both of my children have been diligent in completing the assigned work, but are potentially behind on previous 'normal' academic expectations.

Whilst possibly strange sounding I am not overly concerned, for 2 reasons:

Firstly: My children have easy access to both technology and well-educated mentors, and

Secondly: All learning is not academic. Balancing this they have both become more independent with regard to life skills. For instance, the youngest now is confident to prepare and cook their own meals, and both help with the daily chores required to run a household.

I believe that children of less well-off households will not have such advantages.

David Sanderson MEng (hons) DIS, CEng MIMarEST,

July 2020