

**Meeting of the Thomas Hardy Governing Body in the Dining Hall, Thomas Hardy School and Via Teams – 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021 – 4.30pm**

**Present:** Hugh Griffiths, Tony Moore (Chair), Hilary Over, Rachel Turberville-Smith (Vice-Chair, Parent Governor), Alan Trowbridge, Nick Rutherford (Headteacher), Neil Johnston, Rachel Glennie (Teaching Staff Governor), Nick Thornley; Simon Conibear

**In attendance:** Vicky Smyth (Clerk), Iain Cornell (Deputy Head), Jon Dean (Assistant Head)

**Apologies (Item 1):** Hugh Griffiths, Jo Stoker

**Late Arrivals/Early Leavers:** Jon Dean (for agenda item only), Michelle Matthews (for agenda item only).

Item	Minutes	Action
21/1	<b>Annual Completion of Business Interests (Item 2):</b> None	
21/2	<b>Minutes (Item 3):</b> <b>To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held 7/7/2021 (Item 3a):</b> Proposed by Hilary Over, seconded by Nick Thornley. Unanimously approved as an accurate record. <b>Matters arising (Item 3b):</b> <b>20/73.1 Review Board SWOT Analysis and Questionnaire Outcomes (Item 14.1):</b> Clerk to prepare individual training recommendations according to individual responses and to draft a group-training plan according to the anonymised Board responses. Clerk to identify any recruitment priorities. Clerk to email Governors their personalised training plans and share the draft Board training and recruitment plans via the portal in September for discussion at the next meeting – still ongoing by 13/10/21	
21/3	<b>Receive a report respecting results – Nick Rutherford (Item 4):</b> Mr Rutherford informed Governors that Ms Morrison is not able to attend and that he and Mr Cornell would carry out the presentation. He referred to the results document circulated during the summer holidays. Mr Rutherford urged a note of caution when looking at and comparing data as there was not enough standardisation for it to be as meaningful as it normally would. The staff took the Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) process very seriously and were very rigorous in their approach. The year on year figures have held up well – in some schools data has shot up. Mr Rutherford opined that the information presented is useful for the school to demonstrate where it thinks it is. <b>A Levels</b> - The pass rate of A*-E was 100%. The A Level offer when taking the aggregate remains strong. Exams separate those that are on the borderlines of a grade in a way that TAGs cannot. If the staff have evidence that they are working at the higher grade then they must give them the benefit of the doubt and award it. Performance tables are still suspended so there is no national data available. <b>Q: A Governor asked if there has been many appeals.</b> Mr Cornell confirmed that there have been none so far. There have been approximately 30 centre appeals and 5 have had a grade increase due to special consideration circumstances that were not known about at the time. <b>Q: The Governor commented on concern at the amount of work created through this system.</b> Mr Cornell agreed that there has been a lot of work but	

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the school opted to get everything in order before the holidays. Staff were asked to identify who they thought might appeal or may miss their first choice university. They produced review folders in advance, with evidence available so they could be reviewed quickly in the event of an appeal.

**Q: A Governor asked if many had had university places affected.** Mr Cornell confirmed that it had resulted in a fairly typical year with Tim Ayre doing a fantastic job as the staff member responsible for UCAS.

Mr Rutherford referred to the ALPs aggregate. He explained that this was completed in-house against the 2019 national data to indicate the position if all schools had broadly stayed the same. It may well be different based on actuals if other schools have gone up significantly. Departments have improved and some improvements will be as a result of the borderline phenomenon. Dance was highlighted as a small group where one or two results can make a huge difference. There is no year on year data for the professional pathways as this is new, so the national average two years ago has been used. If Mr Rutherford had the data for this year it would probably be lower. Mr Rutherford explained that the professional pathways is the school's attempt to offer breadth. There are about 70 children that wouldn't be able to come to sixth form without these courses, however, it must be something that the school offers well.

**Q: One Governor queried the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) results.** Mr Cornell explained that the students normally have 3 lessons per week with a tutor and achieve very good outcomes. They were not able to support the students in quite the same way during lockdown and this may have had an impact. In the same way, this may not have been a priority for the students. The EPQ also has a large cohort of nearly 100 students of mixed ability. Some students that drop an A Level in Year 12 take up the EPQ. The BTECs are in groups of about 20. The students may not be quite as able as those that take A Levels and may not have quite as high aspirations so will settle for a merit or pass to get to the next stage. Discussions are taking place in staff teams as to how the BTEC work is broken down and presented to students in order to raise aspirations.

**Q: A Governor asked if teachers will need support as they usually teach A Levels which are very different.** Perhaps it could be approached this way as could they need support to adapt. Mr Cornell opined that it will depend on the subject

**GCSE –** Mr Rutherford noted the low E-Baccalaureate number and explained that THS does not make its pupils take the suite of subjects that qualify. He highlighted the gaps between boys and girls and disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged in pupil progress.

**Q: A Governor enquired as to SEND pupil progress. Mr Rutherford agreed to ask Ms Morrison to look this up and circulate when she is back.** Mr Rutherford added that SEND is a difficult group to interpret as it is such a broad church, from children with mild social and emotional needs through to non-verbal and physically disabled children.

Mr Rutherford noted that the encouraging thing is that staff have good accuracy so the school tends not to have surprises on results days.

**Q: A Governor asked if there is feedback on GCSE results from the students.** Mr Cornell highlighted that appeals are low.

**Q: A Governor shared their view that the process had seemed fair to the**

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	<p>students and that this is a testament to staff.</p> <p>Q: A Governor asked what percentage of pupils take double and triple science. Mr Cornell explained that about 40% take triple and 60% take double. They had found three years ago that the top of double had performed better than the bottom of triple and so they split the pupils according to where the staff think the students will perform best. It is likely that less than 40% of pupils will do triple science in 2022 but they won't know for sure until after the mocks.</p> <p>Q: A Governor asked if there is any information about exams for 2022 yet. Mr Rutherford confirmed that there has been no official release but he hoped it might be nothing more than some exam boards reducing the content.</p> <p>Q: Mr Trowbridge referred to his question circulated in advance respecting interventions and their success. Ms Glennie explained that interventions had been slightly more successful in English than they had in Maths. Maths had more students having interventions but they had performed slightly less well.</p> <p>Q: A Governor asked whether the predicted and potential grades for Year 11 are normal. Mr Rutherford explained that they are waiting for further advice. The government have a difficult decision to make. 1) Go back to 2019, 2) 'Bake-in' inflation or 3) Go back to 2019 results over a number of years. He agreed to update Governors as soon as information is available. Mr Cornell added that staff were very impressed with how Year 10 handled the mocks – application was good though the outcomes were variable. The Chair thanked Mr Rutherford and all the staff at THS for their hard work.</p>	NR
21/5	<p><b>Safeguarding (Item 5): – Jon Dean</b> - circulated KCSIE 2021 in advance Mr Dean referred to the KCSiE 2021 and requested that Governors read Annex A and Part 2. He talked through the main changes and additions this year: Sexual harassment and sexual violence; all schools must be more explicit in their Child Protection and Behaviour policies about peer on peer abuse. He advised Governors that updated versions of both policies will be coming to the Board for their approval.</p> <p>Child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation are also highlighted. It is alleged that the societal group quickest to respond to the pandemic was organised crime. Children are being coerced into criminal or sexual acts, the latter can be physical or virtual and there is usually an imbalance of power. It can be regular or one-off and committed by adults or other children. Staff must record any concerns they have in order to build the picture. County lines continues to be a big concern. They are very active in Bournemouth, this is the 4<sup>th</sup> most active area in the UK. It is very difficult for children to extricate themselves once involved and can appear consensual. The children may think they are doing it as a one-off but then find their families are threatened if they don't continue. The school will be consulting with parents on a sexual behaviour survey for pupils. The aim is to achieve a zero tolerance environment and a culture where students are confident to disclose smaller issues such as sexualised language. Mr Dean added that he is confident that students feel able to disclose bigger issues. Work is ongoing with the guidance team, there are lots of resources available and all staff were spoken to at the start of term. Another change is references to youth produced sexual imaging which was formally called sexting and the issue of receiving unsolicited sexual imaging. Staff should not look at images, investigate or delete them, but confiscate the phone and let the police deal with it. Mental health is another</p>	GOVS JD

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	<p>big concern as a possible indicator of earlier abuse. Some students are reliving experiences that happened at a much earlier age. The school has changed the way guidance is accessed a little and this has so far enabled them more time to be proactive with these issues. Allegations concerning staff will go to Nick Rutherford as Headteacher unless it is about him and in which case they will go to Chair of Governors, and be fed to the LADO. There is now a harm threshold and if it meets the threshold – in that there has or there may be harm to a child, an offence has been committed or the person has behaved in a way that indicates a risk or that they are unsuitable to work with children – they will intervene. There is a lower concern level introduced where behaviour is inconsistent or they may have favourites, take photos of students or are overfriendly. This lower level may not need LADO involvement. <b>The school will amend the policy so that is very clear how we deal with those things.</b></p> <p><b>Q: A Governor enquired as to a senior mental health lead.</b> Mr Dean confirmed that there is a mental health champion and someone in guidance has the potential to do this. Ms Cheney is also looking at the wellbeing of staff. Whether it will be the same person or a different person remains to be seen. We are creating a culture where students feel safe and are happy to report things they are not happy about.</p> <p><b>Q: A Governor asked if the school has the numbers of cases of sexual harassment to report to Governors.</b> Mr Dean agreed to run a report on myconcern for the next meeting but it's not perfect as it depends on how it is categorised at the time. <b>Mr Dean will update at each meeting on the numbers of reports.</b></p> <p><b>Q: Another Governor asked if there are any new gaps now the school is part of a MAT and whether the external agency routes are still the same.</b> Mr Dean explained that any concerns are still reported to social care and there is still the pan-Dorset system. <b>Mr Dean reminded Governors to read the new KCSIE.</b></p>	<p>JD</p> <p>JD</p> <p>GOVS</p>
<p><b>21/6</b></p>	<p><b>Return to School (Item 6) – Nick Rutherford</b></p> <p>Mr Rutherford informed Governors that the return to school has been very positive. The testing was run excellently and all consenting students were tested twice, three days apart. Only one day of teaching time was lost. There are 464 children in Year 9 and 374 in Year 12. All staff are very happy that the disruptive aspects of last year have been removed such as bubbles. Every subject leader is happy with those that have joined. Counselling is being offered to staff, anyone interested is to approach Ms Cheney and 10 staff have thus far. The issues are not related to school in the main but reacclimatising has brought them to the fore. Retention of staff and their positivity is phenomenal but the last two years have taken their toll.</p> <p><b>Q: A Governor asked if there have been many COVID cases.</b> Mr Rutherford confirmed 2 were identified during the testing phase and there was 1 false positive. Mr Cornell said that more have arisen since. Mr Rutherford added that if students or staff get a positive PCR they still need to isolate for 10 days. Mr Cornell confirmed there are no staff off with COVID at present.</p> <p><b>Q: Another Governor asked about vaccinations for students.</b> Ms Turberville-Smith explained that the school nurses will be responsible for this. Mr Rutherford agreed that this is the case and they will not do anything without the correct consent. The school may have to offer a space as they do other vaccinations such as HPV. Once the government has decided, it is likely the school will run it past its solicitors to check liability.</p>	

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21/7	<p><b>School Improvement Plan (Item 7) – Nick Rutherford</b> Mr Rutherford referred to the SIP and the updated version previously circulated. He explained that he had added the reading target 1d as this has become evident as one of the impacts of lockdown. He added that the school had seen this impact in last year's year 9 pupils. Ms Glennie highlighted that this year's year 9 pupils have more positive data. The NRGT tests have not taken place yet.</p> <p><b>Q: A Governor asked what the NRGT is.</b> Mr Rutherford explained that it is an adaptive reading programme. Pupils can make months of progress in weeks. Ms Glennie added that it is very useful in giving pupils a boost. Students in Years 9 and 10 are timetabled weekly.</p> <p><b>Governors were asked to forward their names to the Clerk if they would like to volunteer to cover this strand in the link governor list.</b></p>	GOVS
21/8	<p><b>Admissions (Item 8) –</b> circulated in advance The Clerk explained the statutory change to the Admissions Code affecting criteria 1 and when this took effect. Mr Rutherford explained the changes to criteria 3 and 4, informing Governors that this is to tighten existing criteria. The Clerk also highlighted the proposed definition of a sibling and the removal of the twin clause.</p> <p><b>Q: A Governor asked if the staff are happy with the criteria order as it makes it unlikely their children will get a place.</b> Mr Rutherford explained that this has long been the case and the reality is many staff are local to the area and their children will attend the school on a higher criteria.</p> <p><b>Q: A Governor request that 'good' grade for sixth form entry be defined in the admissions policy. Clerk to amend.</b></p> <p>Ms Turberville-Smith proposed the policy and Mr Johnston seconded. The admissions policy was unanimously approved subject to the aforementioned changes.</p>	VS
21/9 21/9.1  21/9.2	<p><b>Any Other Business</b> <b>Theatre Project –</b> The Chair is aware of the concern of some Governors that also sit on the Foundation Trust board. He has spoken to Mr Rutherford about this and he is also aware that Governors are very supportive of the theatre project so he proposed that the Board park this until the next meeting, by which time he will have more information. <b>The Chair requested that all questions be directed to the Clerk in advance of the next meeting.</b></p> <p><b>Summertime Nursery – Q: A Governor asked if there is an update on the contract between the pre-school and school. Mr Rutherford agreed to look into this.</b></p>	GOVS  NR

**Action Log**

Person	Action	Timing	Outcome/Update
Nick Rutherford	<b>21/4 Receive a report respecting results (Item 4):</b> Circulate SEND progress data	ASAP	
Nick Rutherford	<b>21/4 Receive a report respecting results (Item 4):</b> Inform Governors regarding plans for 2022 exams once known	Ongoing	
Nick Rutherford	<b>21/4 Receive a report respecting results (Item 4):</b> Provide potential and	ASAP	

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	predicted grade data to Governors		
Jon Dean	<b>21/5 Safeguarding (Item 5):</b> Bring updated Child Protection, Behaviour and Managing Allegations policies to Governors	13/10/2021	
Governors	<b>21/5 Safeguarding (Item 5):</b> Read Annex A and Part 2 of Keeping Children Safe in Education	13/10/2021	
Governors	<b>21/7 School Improvement Plan (Item 7):</b> Volunteer to Clerk for link governor role reading SIP strand	ASAP	
Vicky Smyth	<b>21/8 Admissions (Item 8):</b> Make agreed amendments and forward to MAT Board for approval	13/10/2021	Complete – on agenda for 19/10/21
Governors	<b>21/9.1 Any Other Business Theatre Project:</b> Send questions to the Clerk	13/10/2021	
Nick Rutherford	<b>21/9.2 Any Other Business Summertime Nursery:</b> Update on agreement between school and nursery	ASAP	

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