

**Meeting of the Thomas Hardy Governing Body**  
**Training Room, Thomas Hardy School – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020 – 4.30pm**

**Present:** Mike Foley (Headteacher), David Grassby, Tom Hardinge, Garry Batt (Chair) Present via Teams: Tim Gallego, Hugh Griffiths, Rachel Turberville-Smith, Simon Conibear

**In attendance:** Tony Moore (Governor elect), Alan Trowbridge (Governor elect), Vicky Smyth (Clerk), Richard Nicholls (Acting Assistant Headteacher), Iain Cornell (Deputy Head), Laura Cheney (Assistant Head), Claire Noble (Assistant Head), Linda Morrison (Assistant Head), Jon Dean (via Teams, Assistant Head),

**Apologies (Item 1):** Mike Faulkner, Tony Foot - accepted

**Late Arrivals:** Tim Ennion

Item	Minutes	Action									
20/4	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> – Mr Batt welcomed the prospective new Governors to the meeting and introduced them to the Governors.										
20/5	<b>Declarations of Interest (Item 2):</b> None.										
20/6	<b>Elect Chair and Vice Chair (Item 3):</b> <i>Governors agreed to postpone this vote to the next meeting.</i>										
20/7	<p><b>Minutes of the meeting 16<sup>th</sup> September 20 (Item 4.1):</b> were approved and signed as an accurate record</p> <p><b>Matters arising (Item 4.2):</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>19/221 (Item 6):</b> Mr Hardinge asked Governors to review the SIP and forward questions, comments and feedback directly to him</td> <td>Ongoing – Governors to email Mr Hardinge questions on SEF and SIP asap</td> <td>GOVS</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>19/222.3 (Item 7.3):</b> Return SWOT analysis to Mrs Smyth</td> <td>Ongoing – Governors to send SWOT analysis to Mrs Smyth asap</td> <td>GOVS</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>19/224.1 (Item 9.1):</b> Arrange for 2 pupils to attend a Governors meeting to discuss BLM and BAME pupil experiences of THS</td> <td>December meeting</td> <td>MF</td> </tr> </table>	<b>19/221 (Item 6):</b> Mr Hardinge asked Governors to review the SIP and forward questions, comments and feedback directly to him	Ongoing – Governors to email Mr Hardinge questions on SEF and SIP asap	GOVS	<b>19/222.3 (Item 7.3):</b> Return SWOT analysis to Mrs Smyth	Ongoing – Governors to send SWOT analysis to Mrs Smyth asap	GOVS	<b>19/224.1 (Item 9.1):</b> Arrange for 2 pupils to attend a Governors meeting to discuss BLM and BAME pupil experiences of THS	December meeting	MF	
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20/8	<b>Review Link Governor Roles (Item 5):</b> – Circulated in advance Governors discussed the current vacant Link Governor roles. <i>Ms Turberville-Smith agreed to take the role of Safeguarding Governor. Mr Moore agreed to take the role of SEND Governor should he be Co-Opted onto the Board. Governors agreed it would be best to fill the rest of the Link Governor roles once new Governors are in place.</i>										
20/9	<p><b>Receive Aims and Priorities of the MAT (Item 6):</b> – Circulated in advance  Mr Foley gave Governors the narrative of the aims and priorities of the MAT.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr Foley described this as absolutely key. The appointment at THS is strategically important as it is the largest school. If the correct person is in place, the MAT becomes easier to run. There will be 3 relatively new Headteachers in post this year – THS, Bere Regis and St Osmund's</li> <li>Mr Foley confirmed that several appointments had been made over the summer:  Jan McKie will move into her MAT Finance Director role  Karen Weir was appointed MAT Company Secretary. He added that he saw this expanding to a team eventually, undertaking the administration of the MAT</li> </ol>										

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	<p>Karen Aldridge – MAT Health and Safety Manager Michelle Matthews – THS Finance and Business Manager Mr Foley added that the next key post for the MAT would be HR but we would need some of the schools considering joining to convert in order to have the funds to recruit to this position.</p> <p>3) Mr Foley explained that Bere Regis and St Osmund’s were in category before conversion and still needed support. In addition, Damers and THS must also continuously improve and must not be forgotten.</p> <p>4) Governors were informed that the MAT was reactive at present and Mr Foley wants it to move to being proactive. He informed Governors that there are some policies and procedures in place but consistency and commonality of implementation is needed.</p>	
<p><b>20/10</b></p>	<p><b>Review new School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Self Evaluation Form (SEF) (Item 7):</b> Mr Hardinge referred to the documents circulated in advance. He explained that they are lengthy documents as there are a lot of areas to cover in school. Mr Hardinge stressed that he really needs feedback and challenge from Governors, either on the school’s current position or its targets for the next few years. He stated that despite current circumstances, the school did push forward last year, for example, development of independent learners. There are still some details to be updated on the SEF, for example, there is less Year 11 data this year than usual. Mr Hardinge explained that the SIP takes the view of a 3 year plan as the targets set are very ambitious. Mr Hardinge highlighted that there had been a disconnect between the whole school priorities and individual department action plans. He informed Governors that he has tried to streamline and strengthen the process by getting the targets out earlier and building time into the inset days for departments to discuss them as well as ensuring there are CPD groups linked to every area of the SIP. <i>Mr Hardinge asked Governors to email him at least one question on the SIP.</i> Governors need to ensure this is a robust process and how Governors know this to be the case.</p> <p><i>Q: Mr Moore asked if Governors were involved in the SEF.</i> Mr Hardinge referred to Governors visits and gave details.</p> <p><i>Q: Mr Moore asked if Governors had undertaken activities such as book looks when on the organised visits.</i> Mr Hardinge confirmed they had.</p> <p><i>Q: Mr Batt commented that Governors had not visited since the start of the COVID pandemic.</i></p> <p>Mr Hardinge detailed his next steps and that he will be working with the Middle Leaders about quality assurance and how this is done. He added that the link Governor roles will also need to be reviewed so they link better to the SIP.</p> <p><i>Q: Mr Moore asked if Governors have job descriptions.</i> Mrs Smyth confirmed that there are generalised job descriptions but none specific to the school. Mr Hardinge continued that the middle leaders making changes on the ground will bring the about the improvements. Mr Hardinge expressed a desire to re-establish the links with Governors and restart visits, perhaps virtually at first. The quality of the conversations are key. He added that they are also rethinking how to undertake the successful revision sessions in light of the COVID restrictions.</p> <p><i>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith commented that the Governors visits are very valuable and that speaking to subject teachers are the most interesting element.</i> Teachers enjoy talking about their subjects. She expressed her hope that</p>	<p>GOVS</p>

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	<p>Governors will be able to do this again at some point.</p> <p>Q: Mr Conibear commented that his Governor visits had highlighted to him how talented the staff are and how resourceful they are in making contacts that benefit their classes.</p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby asked whether Mr Hardinge wanted questions on the SEF, SIP or both. Mr Hardinge confirmed he would appreciate questions on anything on the document.</p> <p>Q: Mr Conibear enquired as to how the school's practises will change as a result of the present situation and the impact of COVID. Mr Hardinge confirmed that some things will absolutely be kept, for example, recorded videos, self-help tutorials. He informed Governors that a reintegration meeting from an exclusion had been held virtually and was successful.</p> <p>Q: Mr Conibear asked if this will be extended in order to give students virtual access to external speakers, and suggested that this will be easier to do now that we are all used to working with virtual meeting systems.</p> <p>Q: Mr Batt commented that not everyone at home has equipment to be able to participate which is something the school has also learnt.</p> <p>Mr Foley added that live learning is not the answer and that it is not possible to expect someone to sit for 5 hours in front of a screen. He opined that the Open University are the masters of this and that there is little interaction in live learning sessions. Mr Foley confirmed that he had written to parents in preparation of the possibility of a bubble being sent home.</p>	
<b>20/11</b>	<b>Agree Governing Board priorities (Item 8):</b> Deferred	
<b>20/12</b>	<b>Finance and Operations update (Item 9):</b> Deferred	
<b>20/13</b> <b>20/13.1</b>	<p><b>Headteacher's Report (Item 10):</b></p> <p><b>Numbers on roll</b> - Mr Cornell informed Governors that Year 9 is oversubscribed but not as many as initially predicted. Admissions appeals are still ongoing. Numbers on roll are healthy but a strain due to the COVID precautions needed. Governors discussed sixth form figures and Mr Cornell noted that numbers of pupils coming from All Saints School has reduced year on year.</p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby asked for the numbers of pupils we used to get applying from All Saints School. Mr Cornell stated that it used to be between 50-60 pupils at its height. It is possible the more academic students are opting to attend sixth form at Budmouth School but that it may also be linked to a longer term trend in All Saint which is a concern for Weymouth and Thomas Hardy School.</p> <p>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith enquired as to the number of pupils coming from Wey Valley School and whether this has changed as a result of a new Headteacher. Mr Cornell noted there hadn't been a significant change as yet. Governors discussed that staff have been in school throughout the pandemic and working as flexibly as possible.</p> <p>Q: Mr Batt requested that Governors great thanks to all be recorded in the minutes.</p>	
<b>20/13.2</b>	<p><b>Staffing</b> – Mr Cornell informed Governors of several new appointments with recruitment during lockdown being particularly good. The changes to E for E and Sixth Form have been successful thus far this term. Governors were advised that Mr Foley and Mr Cornell are conducting exam meetings as usual this term without having exam results. Gaps in knowledge are being identified. Year 13 have missed out on Year 12 exams and Year 11 are on track.</p> <p>Q: Mr Moore enquired as to the impact another lockdown will have.</p>	VS

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<p><b>20/13.3</b></p>	<p><i>Q: Mr Grassby referred to the news that exams will be 3 weeks later than usual and enquired as to the impact for the school.</i>          Mr Cornell noted the changes to teaching that have taken place as a result of COVID, for example, there is no making in DT at present and added that teachers are currently confident with regards to exams but increasing cases may change things.</p> <p><i>Q: Mr Moore enquired as to the plans for mocks.</i> Mr Cornell commented that it will be impossible to run mocks as the school would usually in December, due to the space required for bubbles. Mr Foley added that to use mocks as a formal grade as suggested in summer 20 does not allow for students that may be isolating whilst the mocks take place. He commented that the 3 weeks push back of exams may cause more problems, for example with university places.</p> <p><b>Buildings</b> – Mr Cornell reminded Governors of the successful windows bid. Current issue is the timing of window replacement. Mr Foley informed Governors that the refurbishment of the Theatre is a real priority. He explained that the theatre is getting increasingly dishevelled, difficult and dangerous to get the seats out and that it should be the main showpiece of the school as this is the place parents and family are most likely to see for shows and talks. It can also generate significant income. Kendall Kingscott were asked to come up with proposals from the most basic – a stage refurbishment and replacement seating at a cost of £700k to a complete refurbishment with a mezzanine level, control room, new backstage and new seating for £2.2 million. The middle option of a completely refurbished theatre within the existing floor space, no mezzanine, automated theatre seats, automated lighting rig and new toilets at a cost of £1.1million is the preferred option. Mr Foley informed Governors of the funding avenues available.</p> <p><i>Q: Mr Batt opined that it is about the best value for money for the school.</i> Mr Foley agreed and stated that the £1.1million option will provide an amazing space for the school. A covered walkway from the canteen to the school is also being considered.</p> <p><i>Q: Mr Grassby enquired as to event hire.</i> Mr Foley anticipated 30 events per year including with Dorchester Arts. Hire will need to be paid for.</p> <p><i>Q: Mr Batt added that he feels it is a moral belief that the facilities should be shared with the community.</i></p>	
<p><b>20/13.4</b></p>	<p><b>Attendance</b> – Mr Cornell explained that national data is difficult to access. Attendance seems to be a lot higher than national figures and the number of students isolating appears to be lower.</p>	
<p><b>20/13.5</b></p>	<p><b>Behaviour</b> – Mr Cornell informed Governors that the new way of working has presented issues with behaviour. Events are cancelled though a few exams in the Autumn series are taking place.</p>	
<p><b>20/13.6</b></p>	<p><b>Parents Evenings</b> – Parents have found the virtual parents' evenings more convenient to attend so this may be a long-term shift. Mr Dean is looking into this further.</p>	
<p><b>20/13.7</b></p>	<p><b>COVID</b> – Mrs McKie confirmed that the school spent more money than it could reclaim on COVID expenses. A plan for how the catch-up funding will be spent will come to Governors as it must be accounted for. Mr Cornell informed Governors that not as many students are as behind as expected.</p>	
<p><b>20/14</b></p>	<p><b>Policies</b></p>	
<p><b>20/14.1</b></p>	<p><b>Data Protection</b> – Received</p>	
<p><b>20/14.2</b></p>	<p><b>Admissions</b> – Mrs Smyth explained the process. Mr Foley advised that he</p>	

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	had received a verbal comment respecting the entry criteria and a possible disadvantage this may create for a small group of students attending a specific school. <i>Governors discussed this query and asked Mrs Smyth to looking into whether the school that had raised it could be added to the list of feeder schools. If not, it was felt that the current entry criteria are fit for purpose and reflect the ethos of the school and on this basis, Governors would recommend the Admissions policy for approval by MAT Directors.</i>	VS
<b>20/15</b> <b>20/15.1</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b> <b>Headteacher Appointment</b> – Directors have met and discussed the applicants that morning. There is one day for candidates to come in and find out about the school, followed by a gap and then two further days of more traditional interview activities. Governors are invited to attend the presentations on 20/10/20 at 11am. Senior staff and Heads from DASP have also been invited. <i>Mr Foley confirmed he would write to Governors at the same time as the candidates.</i> He also informed Governors that he has invited Mr Grassby to be part of the interview panel all day on the 4 <sup>th</sup> November and the morning of the 5 <sup>th</sup> November and Mr Grassby has accepted.	MF
<b>20/15.2</b>	<b>Governor appointment</b> – Mrs Smyth asked Governors to vote on whether Mr Moore be appointed to the Board. <i>Governors unanimously voted to appoint Mr Moore to the Board.</i> Mrs Smyth asked Governor the same question in respect of Mr Trowbridge. <i>Governors unanimously voted that Mr Trowbridge be appointed to the Board.</i> Meeting closed 6pm	

**Action Log**

<b>Person</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Outcome/Update</b>
Governors	<b>Review new School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Self Evaluation Form (SEF) (Item 7):</b> Email at least 1 question on the SIP or SEF to Mr Hardinge	ASAP	Complete
Vicky Smyth	<b>20/13.2 Headteacher's Report (Item 10):</b> Record Governors thanks to staff in the minutes	ASAP	Complete
Vicky Smyth	<b>20/14.2 Admissions Policy (Item 11.2):</b> Investigate whether school can be added to feeder criteria	ASAP	Complete – Due to the school's type, it cannot be added as named feeder school in the admissions policy entry criteria
Mike Foley	<b>20/15.1 Any other business – Headteacher Interviews:</b> Write to Governors to invite them to presentation element of new Headteacher Interviews on 20/10/20 at 11am	ASAP	Complete – Karen Weir undertook of behalf of Mike Foley

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