

**Meeting of the Thomas Hardy Governing Body  
Conference Room, Thomas Hardy School – 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020 – 4.30pm**

**Present:** Tim Gallego (via Teams), Rachel Turberville-Smith (Chair for this meeting), Mike Foley (Headteacher), Tom Hardinge (Staff Governor), Mike Faulkner (via Teams, Staff Governor)

**In attendance:** 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):** Garry Batt, Simon Conibear – away, David Grassby – unwell. All accepted. Hugh Griffiths provided apologies after the meeting explaining that he had been detained in an earlier meeting.

**Late Arrivals/Early Leavers:** N/A

Item	Minutes	Action
<b>20/1</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest (Item 2):</b> None. Mrs Smyth will circulate pre-populated forms for Governors to amend if necessary, sign and return.	VS/ GOVS
<b>20/2</b>	<p><b>Results</b></p> <p>Mrs Morrison informed Governors that the school had come out as an ALPs 4 at A-Level on the day, before the government u-turn. The CAG are slightly high in some cases and there were winners and losers as a result of the abrupt end to the school year. The winners are students that staff have given the benefit of the doubt to; the losers are those that study more towards the end of term in preparation for exams. The pass rate and headline figures are very similar to 2018, which is not outside of the realms of expectation as they were a good year group and expected to exceed the previous year's results. The final overall ALPS score was a 1, though close to a 2. Mrs Morrison opined that the school would have achieved a 2 or a high 3 in normal circumstances. Dance and Drama have significantly improved though this was also expected as the cohort was higher ability in comparison to last year. There was a real debacle with BTEC results that has since been resolved with increases here too.</p> <p><i>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith enquired as to whether all students got their university places.</i></p> <p>Ms Morrison confirmed that they hadn't. Mr Nicholls added that most had received places but those that had really missed out were the students that didn't meet their offer with their Centre Assessed Grade (CAG) and were late to clearing due to the government confusion. Mr Foley noted that Independent School pupils were advantaged in this regard as the release of their results meant they had earlier access to clearing than non-independent students. Some students are coming back to Year 14 to improve their grades. Mr Foley requested Ms Morrison share her thoughts on the publicity surrounding grade inflation. Ms Morrison explained that most teachers are able to accurately estimate the number of different grades their class are likely to achieve, however, if there is a borderline student the teacher must give them the benefit of the doubt. Ms Morrison stated that none of the CAGs awarded are outside the sphere of the student's ability. A teacher may know that their class will achieve 4 A grades but there might be 6 students capable of achieving those grades. What they are unable to know is which 4 will perform on the day. Ms Morrison explained the workings of the algorithm and</p>	

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	<p>gave some examples of how its basis in prior attainment meant that they were awarded a grade far lower than their CAG. She added that if there were more than 15 students in a class, the CAGs were not used at all. The GCSE results were also slightly higher than usual. The students undertake 12 subjects rather than the 3 or 4 at A Level. The ALPS score was a high 3 last year and is a middle 2 this year so again, not outside the realms of expectation. The progress 8 score of +0.89 will need to be taken with a pinch of salt and there is no national data to compare against so they will have to compare against previous years. There will also be no performance tables. The results do show that there is still a gap between boys and girls and between disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged. Ms Morrison opined that usual phenomena of tailing off before exams and exam anxiety couldn't have any impact here. There was a better balance between the science trilogy and double. There are some students that want to appeal but this is not possible unless it is an admin error, so a small number will be sitting exams in the Autumn. The ALPs subject scores are good with no blue and only some grey. There is slightly more red than usual but this was also expected for this year.</p> <p><b>Strengths and Weaknesses</b> – Ms Morrison stated that the wide curriculum offer including BTEC courses, is a key strength.</p> <p>Boys progress and outcomes for disadvantaged students as well as MFL progress remain a focus for improvement. A mentoring system to support students to get the grades they are capable of is another strength</p> <p>Mr Foley thanked Ms Morrison and assured Governors that the process had been very thorough; he gave an example of returning to one department and asking them to raise their grades as they had depressed the students unrealistically.</p> <p><i>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith asked if exams would be held in 2021.</i> Mr Cornell opined that they would be. Ofqual has recommended they go ahead.</p> <p><i>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith enquired as to whether university admissions were higher or lower than usual.</i> Mr Foley explained that the universities had not wanted students to defer. Mr Cornell added that there appears to be fewer foreign students than usual with Mr Nicholls commenting that this perhaps would have reduced competition for places. Some have deferred and there will be a knock-on effect for the current Year 13, especially if the number of foreign students also increases. Mr Foley informed Governors that there is no national advice at present. There are areas such as Bolton and Blackburn on local lockdown and Mr Foley questioned how this would be accounted for should it happen at exam time. He opined that the government needed to release some scenarios swiftly.</p>	
20/3	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>Succession Planning</b> – Mr Foley confirmed that he and Mr Batt are working hard to recruit new Governors and have approached Mr Trowbridge, former Finance Manager at THS, to serve on the Board with his finance skills and knowledge. Mr Grassby has put forward a possible contact and there are at least 2 further candidates for consideration in due course.</p> <p><b>Headteacher Appointment</b> – The Directors have begun the process of producing an advert and mapping out the interview process. It is hoped an appointment shall be made in December and Governors will be informed once the process is confirmed.</p>	

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	<p><b>Wearing of Masks</b> – Mr Foley sought advice from Ms Turberville-Smith respecting the use of masks in school. He outlined the current government policy of not wearing masks, the current school policy of optional mask wearing and shared some recent comments from parents. He added that he had spoken to another Headteacher whom has observed mask swapping in a school with a strict mask wearing policy. Ms Turberville-Smith reiterated the facts about mask wearing, referring to scientific studies and urged Mr Foley to continue following government advice. Mr Foley stated that he would stick to the optional mask wearing policy and would reconsider this if the number of cases locally increased dramatically or if the government advice changed.</p> <p><i>Q: Mr Gallego informed Governors that the feedback he had been given locally on the results issue is that the school had handled it fantastically. He opined that the results didn't look unrealistic when he had read the report. He added that the only slightly negative comment was that the lower sixth had had little contact for 4 months.</i></p> <p>Mr Foley agreed that there is no doubt that this cohort has been disadvantaged.</p> <p><i>Q: Mr Gallego stated that his interactions had highlighted a feeling that a special effort for Year 12 is required. Mr Foley opined that the current years 11 and 13 are the most disadvantaged of all as they missed 6 months of education and are likely to have a very difficult year due to the possibility of further disruption. The previous year 11 and 13 were almost at the end of their courses when lockdown took place where as the current year 13 have had a disrupted year 12 and may have to compete for fewer places at university next year as a result of deferrals.</i></p> <p><i>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith commented on the difficulty of choosing a university when you are unable to visit. Mr Foley agreed.</i></p> <p>Meeting closed 5.15pm</p>	
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**Action Log**

Person	Action	Timing	Outcome/Update
Vicky Smyth	<b>20/1 Declarations of Interest (Item 2):</b> Circulate declaration of business interest forms	ASAP	Complete
Governors	<b>20/1 Declarations of Interest (Item 2):</b> Review, amend if necessary, sign and return declaration forms	ASAP	Partially Complete

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