

**The Conference Room, Thomas Hardy School – 11th September 2019 – 4.30pm
Meeting of the Thomas Hardy School Governing Body**

Present: David Grassby (Acting Vice-Chair), Tony Foot, Tim Gallego, Tom Hardinge (Staff Governor), Helen Arthy (Parent Governor), Rachel Turberville-Smith (Parent Governor), Mike Faulkner (Staff Governor), Mike Foley (Headteacher)

In attendance: Vicky Smyth (Clerk), Iain Cornell (Deputy Headteacher), Linda Morrison (Assistant Headteacher), Natasha Ullah (Deputy Headteacher), Laura Cheney (Assistant Headteacher), Tim Ennion (Assistant Headteacher)

Apologies (Item 1): Simon Conibear, Garry Batt (Chair), Hugh Griffiths

Late Arrivals/Early Leavers: N/A

Item	Minutes	Action
19/10	Annual Completion of Business Interest Forms for Register (Item 2): <i>Mrs Smyth to contact any Governors yet to return forms</i>	VS
19/11 19/11.1 19/11.2	Minutes of the meeting: 10th July 2019 (Item 3): were approved and signed as an accurate record Matters arising: Mrs Smyth assured Governors that items 6 and 7 on today's agenda would be covered at the October meeting as per the minutes of the last meeting. Mr Foley confirmed that the budget had been approved by Directors at their meeting on the 15 th July and the in-year deficit is still expected to be £139k for 19/20. He informed Governors that 428 pupils have been admitted to Year 12 and that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) would continue to be financially prudent.	
19/12 19/12.1	Results – Linda Morrison presentation (Item 4) A Levels - Mrs Morrison noted that the results are not as good as the previous year but closer to those of 2016. The results were accurately predicted as the group had not been a strong cohort at GCSE. Mrs Morrison highlighted to Governors the drop in the ALPs Score from 2 to 4, however, the 3 year T-score remains a 2. It is predicted that the school will be back on track next year. Q: Mr Foley raised the possibility of moving to a 3 as a result of re-marks and the fact that many EPQ results had not been included in the first report. Mrs Morrison opined that the score was likely to improve but unlikely to move to the 3 bracket. She confirmed that she would resubmit her report once all re-marks and EPQs had been included. Q: Ms Turberville-Smith asked if students' grades are likely to go down. Mrs Morrison confirmed that it is possible so the school advocates re-marks if the student was close to gaining the next grade up. Q: Ms Arthy enquired as to who requests the re-marks. Mrs Morrison explained that it is often a combination of the school, the pupil themselves or the pupil's parents. The school may request a re-mark if they feel there are significant disparities, for example, a 3 grade difference between English Literature and English Language results at GCSE or if a student is very far from predicted grades. Q: Ms Turberville-Smith asked if re-marks are expensive. Mr Cornell stated that they are in the region of £50 per paper. The school will pay if they want the re-mark, otherwise, the parents or pupil will pay. If the grade changes the re-mark is free. Regardless of whether it is the school or the parent that wants the re-mark, permission from the pupil must be sought. Q: Mr Grassby queried the Dance result. Mrs Morrison responded that the	

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<p>19/12.2</p>	<p>subject had very small numbers and will be monitored closely by SLT. If it appears that a trend is developing, an intervention will be made. She highlighted the Law results as positive and that further investigation into the Economic results is taking place. She noted that the few blue subjects has had an impact on the overall T-Score.</p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby queried the Sociology results and asked if it was to do with numbers. Mr Cornell explained that the numbers for Economics and Sociology are fairly constant. Mrs Morrison added that SLT are still monitoring the BTEC results as they feel they could still be stronger. Mrs Morrison highlighted that 77 students had taken part in the EPQ.</p> <p>GCSE - Mrs Morrison informed Governors that the GCSE results are not as strong this year, though are consistently good and above national norms and averages. The English and Maths pass rates are exceptional. Most other subjects have dipped with a few exceptions</p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby commented that it was strange that the English and Maths pass rates are good but the Science is lower. Mrs Morrison opined that students see English and Maths as the most important subjects and concentrate extra effort as they know they need them for their next steps. The Progress 8 score has also dipped but at +0.3 the students are still achieving around a third of a grade better than nationally. The -0.01 score for disadvantaged pupils means that they achieved the same as non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. DT remains strong. SLT are to address the Science trilogy and combined Science question shortly.</p> <p>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith asked whether students took the short or full Theology GCSE. Mrs Morrison confirmed it is the full GCSE. Mr Hardinge commented that this was on 2 fewer lessons than those taking History or Geography. Mrs Morrison informed Governors that the school still achieved a 3 ALPs score for GCSEs and discussed the blue scores. She noted that pupils who take Media are usually those that have been advised not to take a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) and are generally weaker academically. German and Spanish results are disappointing and there is now a reduced offer in German; the current Year 10s will be the last cohort to take a German GCSE. Most students would rather take Spanish or French but student and parent engagement also needs improving.</p>	
<p>19/12.3</p>	<p>Strengths - Mrs Morrison went through the strengths with Governors.</p> <p>Q: Mrs Arthy asked if BTECs are a recent addition or had they always been part of the offer. Ms Ullah explained that a small number of pupils as a pilot group, had taken BTECs three years ago. SLT could see a need for qualifications suitable for slightly weaker students in the wake of A Level reform. All are high quality level 3 qualifications.</p> <p>Q: Mrs Arthy enquired as to the entry criteria. Ms Ullah confirmed that students wishing to study a BTEC require five passes at grade 4 or above plus a grade 5 in the subject they wish to study and that this is slightly lower than A level entry criteria. Mrs Morrison added that many students will study a combination of BTEC and A Level.</p> <p>Mrs Morrison noted that girls progress at GCSE is the same as the previous year and that boys are slightly better at A Level.</p>	
<p>19/12.4</p>	<p>Areas for Development - SLT will focus on the blue areas to identify whether this is a dip, small numbers in the group or something more complicated. The reduction in top grades at A Level will also be considered. There was a significant push in this area a few years ago and perhaps this</p>	

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needs to be repeated. At GCSE the issue with male progress is an area for consideration. This is a national picture but the difference here is significant with a Progress 8 score of +0.2 for boys vs +0.63 for girls. MFL will also remain a focus for attention. The reduction in level 9 grades at GCSE will be investigated, as will the predicted vs actual grades and whether the impact of the school mentoring system is good enough. Mrs Morrison explained that members of SLT and College leaders work with students identified as in need of extra support, one to one, for six weeks.

Q: Ms Turberville-Smith asked if this is to improve their grades for them or in comparison to other students. Mrs Morrison confirmed that it is for them, taking account of their prior abilities and where they should be. She added that she met with College Leaders the previous evening to discuss whether there is a better use of time in this regard.

Q: Ms Arthy enquired as to where the national statistics for girls vs boys are. *Mrs Morrison agreed to send a link to the DfE document for Mrs Smyth to circulate*

Q: Ms Arthy and Ms Turberville-Smith enquired as to whether there was any known reason for this disparity, for example, differing levels of maturity. Mr Cornell stated that there are many conversations nationally about this and the consensus is that there is no one overriding issue but a multitude of things, such as motivation, organisation, ability to revise and maturity. Mr Foley added that an experiment had shown that boys are more likely to overestimate their outcomes and girls underestimate.

Q: Ms Arthy questioned whether the work to encourage girls had resulted in a drop in boys results. Mrs Morrison clarified that this encouragement was in STEM subjects particularly and boys are still outperforming girls here.

Q: Mr Grassby asked whether the mentoring system is different in English and Maths. Mrs Morrison opined that it is a combination as well as the students recognising the importance of these subjects. Mr Foley added that the teaching in these two departments is exceptional as well as the effort put into clubs paying off.

Q: Mr Grassby asked if there was any information on mark boundaries. Mrs Morrison informed Governors she would need to check to be sure but thought that a pass mark of around 50% in A level Maths would secure a grade A but in order to pass Foundation a mark of over 75-80% was required.

Mr Foley confirmed that the Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and School Improvement Plan (SIP) would give Governors more detail of the strengths and areas for development of the school. Heads of Department are currently undertaking reviews looking at each subject, each class, each pupil and even each question on each exam paper to identify what had gone well and what needed improving. They would then write a report and attend an interview with SLT to discuss their findings. SLT are keen to return to a 2/3 T-Score at A Level. The feedback on the current Year 13 is good.

Q: Ms Arthy asked if this means the cohort is high performing. Ms Ullah agreed, adding that there is also a noticeable cohort of boys in certain subjects.

Q: Mr Grassby asked if there was a certain combination of students e.g. Sociology and PE, last year. Ms Ullah agreed with Mr Grassby's thoughts, noting that the written exam element had been weaker. Mr Foley added that despite this, students reaching their final destinations is still good. Ms Ullah agreed, explaining that staff had had to do little in terms of support for

LM/VS

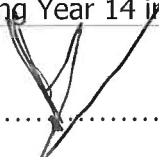
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	<p>students on results day as most had plans in place and had got onto a course/next step of choice.</p> <p>Q: Mr Gallego enquired as to the effect the EPQ has. Mrs Morrison explained that it is a standalone qualification worth half an A Level. Mr Foley noted that some universities made reduced offers if students had the EPQ. Ms Turberville-Smith added that in her experience, universities viewed the qualification positively as it was largely independent.</p> <p>Q: Mr Gallego asked who was encouraged to undertake the EPQ. Ms Ullah explained that it was offered to Year 12's and there is now an additional opportunity for Year 13's.</p> <p>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith asked whether those that undertake the EPQ are the more motivated students. Ms Ullah and Ms Morrison thought not, stating that those undertaking the EPQ are not necessarily the most motivated or most able students. Ms Turberville-Smith noted that the students are researching a topic they have chosen themselves.</p> <p>Mr Foley advised Governors of the fantastic support pre-and post-results provided by the staff and that they are a credit to the sixth form team. He gave his thanks.</p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby requested that thanks and congratulations, on behalf of all Governors, to students and staff in respect of the results, be minuted. It is important that the results are still very good and Governors must not lose sight of this. <i>Governors unanimously agreed.</i></p> <p>Mr Foley thanked Mr Grassby and the Governors for their support and assured them that staff will continue to concentrate on improving outcomes. He added that the forthcoming conversations with Heads of Department will also focus on unpicking where students had done well as often encouragement is needed here to prevent too much focus on the negatives.</p> <p>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith expressed her personal view that she is glad to hear this for morale and motivation purposes. Mr Foley agreed that staff are devastated when performance is not as good as expected and that they take the results personally.</p>	
<p>19/13</p>	<p>Succession Planning (Item 5)</p> <p>Mr Grassby requested that Governors focus on the email from Mrs Smyth over the summer, containing the analysis of the skills audit and the skills needed in new Governors. He requested that Governors identify community members and actively encourage any possible candidates. Mrs Smyth opined that 4 new Governors are required to bring the total number of the Governing Body up to 15. This would allow for greater flexibility with regards to panel attendance as well as spreading the Link Governor roles evenly. Other recruitment methods will also be considered, such as inspiring governance and advertising. Governors also need to consider personal development including stepping up to the Vice Chair and Chair roles. <i>Succession Planning will be added to the next agenda.</i></p>	<p>GOV</p> <p>VS</p>
<p>19/14</p>	<p>Any other business</p> <p>Q: Ms Arthy asked Ms Ullah the % of students going on to Higher Education. Ms Ullah stated that she would need to check to be accurate but thought it was around 72%. Four students have gone to Oxbridge and Apprenticeships have been very successful this year.</p> <p>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith enquired as to the numbers taking up medicine. Ms Ullah believes 4 students are studying medicine. A couple of students are taking Year 14 in order to improve their grades so they can progress to</p>	

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<p>veterinary science.</p> <p>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith observed that most students are progressing to their chosen next stage which is the most important thing. Ms Ullah added that the schools NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) figure after 2 terms is only 1-2% which is excellent. The school has to provide support for the first 2 terms after leaving, if needed. After this, ex-students become difficult to track.</p> <p>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith enquired as to the Year 14. Ms Ullah confirmed that there are 18 students in Year 14. They are only allowed to stay if it is going to have a positive impact on their next steps or because of a medical disruption to their Year 12/13.</p> <p>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith asked if this is funded. Ms Ullah confirmed that it is but at a reduced rate.</p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby requested that a reminder of the roles of the Members, Directors and Governors be circulated. <i>Mrs Smyth to circulate.</i></p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby raised the prospect of Ofsted. Mr Foley confirmed that the rules are changing, though it has yet to go through parliament to become law. Presently, Outstanding schools are not in the inspection schedule unless concerns arise. Mr Foley asserted his belief that this change is a good thing for several reasons; including that schools can deteriorate quickly and regular inspection can prevent complacency and not inspecting Outstanding schools can skew Inspectors' experiences of inspection.</p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby requested an aide memoire on the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Mr Foley stated that this will all be included in the SIP and SEF, which will feature on the October Agenda. Mr Foley asked if Governors would like Caroline Dearden to attend a meeting to explain the recent changes to the Ofsted inspection framework. <i>Governors unanimously agreed.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">VS</p> <p style="text-align: right;">MF</p>
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Action Log

Person	Action	Timing	Outcome/Update
Vicky Smyth	19/10 Item 2: Chase Governors yet to return Business Interest Forms	ASAP	
Linda Morrison/Vicky Smyth	19/12.4 Item 4: Send link to DfE statistics document to Mrs Smyth for her to circulate to Governors	ASAP	
Governors	19/13 Item 5: Identify and encourage members of the local community with the skills needed on the LGB to consider becoming a Governor. Also consider personal development including acting as Vice Chair/Chair	1 st October 19	
Vicky Smyth	19/13 Item 5: Add succession planning to next agenda	1 st October 19	
Vicky Smyth	19/14: Circulate a reminder of the roles of Members, Directors and Governors	ASAP	
Mike Foley	19/14: Arrange for Caroline Dearden to attend a meeting to update Governors on the changes to the Ofsted framework	Ongoing	

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