

**The Conference Room, Thomas Hardy School – 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019 – 4.30pm  
Meeting of the Thomas Hardy School Governing Body**

**Present:** Mike Foley (Headteacher), Garry Batt (Chair), David Grassby (Vice Chair), Helen Arthy (Parent Governor), Rachel Turberville-Smith (Parent Governor), Hugh Griffiths, Simon Conibear, Tom Hardinge (Teaching Staff Governor)

**In attendance:** Natasha Ullah (Deputy Headteacher), Laura Cheney (Assistant Headteacher), Iain Cornell (Deputy Headteacher), Vicky Smyth (Clerk)

**Apologies (Item 1):** Tony Foot, Tim Gallego - Business

**Late Arrivals/Early Leavers:** Mr Grassby left at 17.46

Item	Minutes	Action
<b>19/66</b>	<b>Declaration of Business Interests (Item 2):</b> No new declarations	
<b>19/67</b>	<b>Staff Visitor (Item 3)</b> <i>Invite Phil Eadie to the next meeting</i> Mr Foley informed Governors that a previous sixth form student, Imani Thompson, has won a competition to be featured in this month's Vogue magazine. Copy available to read in school. Mr Batt thanked Miss Ullah, on behalf of the Governors, for all her hard work, particularly on the School Improvement Plan and the Link Governor visits. He wished her every success in her new role as a Headteacher in Poole.	VS
<b>19/68</b> <b>19/68.1</b>	<b>Minutes of the meeting 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019 (Item 4):</b> were approved and signed as an accurate record <b>Matters arising:</b> <b>19/39.9</b> - Head of Children's Services at Dorset Council has left and the position is presently vacant. <b>19/42 Succession Planning</b> – Garry Batt and Hugh Griffiths to meet briefly after the meeting to discuss vacancies and potential candidates. Ms Turberville-Smith advised Governors that her possible applicant did not wish to pursue the matter further. <i>Mr Batt informed Governors that he has 4 potential Governors/Trustees or Directors interested and that he and Mike would meet with them to further discuss suitability for the vacancies available.</i>	GB/ MF
<b>19/68.2</b>	Q: Mr Grassby asked whether Governors at other schools in the MAT might consider joining the board. Mr Foley explained that there are recruitment issues in governance generally. Q: Mr Grassby asked for an Ofsted aide memoir for Governors from Senior Management and a breakdown of the roles of Members, Directors and Governors on an A4 sheet. <i>Mrs Smyth agreed to produce a breakdown of the roles within the MAT but reminded Governors that this information could be found in the Governance Code of Conduct and the Scheme of Delegation should they wish to review this information sooner.</i> Mr Foley added that they are making good progress with succession planning thanks to Mr Batt and work will continue.	VS
<b>19/69</b> <b>19/69.1</b>	<b>Finance and Operations (Item 6)</b> <b>Audit (Item 5)</b> – Mrs McKie advised Governors that the external audit went well and the final document will be circulated and published on the school website once signed off. The Directors met with the auditors last week and discussed the figures in depth. The Trust surplus was forecast to be £1.279	

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<p><b>19/69.2</b></p>	<p>million and the actual was £1.284million. The auditors expressed their confidence in the financial systems across the Trust and opined that it is in a strong position for further growth. For the forecast to be within £5k of the actual outturn is exceptional. She noted that the team had worked very hard and wished her thanks to them be recorded in the minutes. <i>Governors were in full agreement and thanked Mrs McKie for her and the work of her team.</i></p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby clarified that Albert Goodman is the Trust’s auditors and asked who the accountants are. Mr Foley queried whether Mr Grassby meant the Trust’s internal auditors and confirmed that it was SWAP, however, they have decided to leave the academy market and Mrs McKie is currently awaiting a quote to provide the service for one last year. Mrs McKie added that it is not good practice for Albert Goodman to undertake both roles though if there is no alternative, they can assign different teams.</p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby enquired as to the costs involved. Mrs McKie explained that internal audit can be anywhere from a few hundred to a thousand pounds and external audit is £12k. The fact that the Trust operates a single bank account means extra schools won’t result in significant additional audit costs as the Trust grows. The final in-year deficit for Thomas Hardye School was -£149k. Governors were reminded that the deficit was originally forecast to be £500k. Bere Regis had a surplus of £16k but there are issues with falling numbers. The Directors are fully aware and are monitoring. There was also a deficit in the MAT due to the timing of funds. There were several minor management points, 2 were policy related and 1 was related to id information held on file for staff.</p> <p><b>Budget Monitoring (Item 6a)</b> – Ms McKie circulated a hard copy of the budget, finalised that morning. She referred Governors to the % of budget spent column and explained each area.</p> <p>Q: Mr Batt enquired as to the Teaching School figures. Mrs McKie explained that there is still more income to arrive but as the income fluctuates, they always set a low level amount in the budget.</p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby asked if accurate management accounts are being circulated monthly. Ms McKie confirmed that the Chair of Directors receives a consolidated report monthly. She highlighted that staffing figures are likely to change as some staffing costs are still to be moved to the MAT central fund. Mr Foley reminded Governors that a whole new finance system had been implemented and informed them that the auditors had been very complimentary about the navigation of the educational funding crisis.</p>	
<p><b>19/70</b></p>	<p><b>Performance Management (Item 7 PM) – Natasha Ullah</b></p> <p>Ms Ullah gave a presentation on the school’s pm procedure and cited some anonymised examples of targets. She went into detail about the 7 principles of effective pm and explained the pentagram of evidence indicators. Teaching staff use the Teachers’ Standards to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses. Ms Ullah explained the pm meetings and their place in the School Improvement cycle. She demonstrated the use of staff feedback on the process, including changing some inset days to allow more time for pm meetings to take place. CPD tools and the teaching school support staff to get to where they need to be or to excel. Guidance for staff and draft agendas for CPD meetings have also been developed.</p> <p>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith asked who oversees the process. Ms Ullah explained</p>	

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that Mr Dean organises the process.

Q: Mr Grassby asked if all CPD is carried out by Senior Management. Ms Ullah confirmed that line managers are responsible and it is cascaded down through the management tiers with a check held on reasonable numbers per manager with support from SLT if required. She went on to highlight that objectives are kept on sharepoint so that senior management can chase and quality assure targets easily. If a staff member is due to move to the Upper Pay Range (UPR) they are invited to write and apply, which involves completing an application form to request progression and provide strong evidence. The process is not automatic and at least one staff member has chosen not to progress even though they are eligible.

Q: Mr Grassby queried the statistics. Ms Ullah went through the in-year changes and number of people in each of the ranges.

Q: Ms Tuberville-Smith queried whether the numbers in the different ranges were normal. Ms Ullah confirmed that it is not normal as there is a small proportion of Middle Pay Range (MPR) and many on the UPR. An analysis showed that 81% of teachers are on UPR and the start dates confirmed that many teachers remain at THS and move on within the school. She noted that 46% of teachers have been at THS for 10 years or longer and over 3/4 of staff have been here more than 4 years. This is costly but provides an experienced and stable staff base.

Q: Prof Griffiths noted that this also maintains culture.

Q: Ms Arthy asked if there are any disadvantages other than expense. Ms Ullah opined that opportunities for development can be limited and ambitious staff may not be able to progress as quickly as they would like. However, this depends on the motivations of the individual. Mr Foley added that there is a danger of the staff body growing stale, however, he reiterated the importance of the Teaching School and MAT and the opportunities that they may provide staff with. He noted that the schools with stability are the most successful at the highest level.

Q: Ms Arthy highlighted that the longevity of staff service could be considered against the trend when looking at the numbers leaving teaching, and that staff retention is an achievement of the school as an employer in a volatile sector. Ms Ullah went on to discuss staff that are not performing, informing Governors that a support plan is put in place to help them improve. Staff either improve or choose to leave. This shows that the culture of the pm is right. SLT can provide examples of this over time in their areas.

Q: Mr Grassby asked whether CPD is voluntary. Ms Ullah confirmed that it is compulsory and everyone is expected to take part in some form of CPD with many choosing to do more than the calendar slots.

Q: Ms Turberville-Smith asked if formalised student feedback is used as part of the process. Ms Ullah confirmed that it is not. Departments meet with students as a working group.

Q: Ms Turberville-Smith queried why this is not part of the process, such as a student survey. Ms Ullah noted Ms Turberville-Smith's thoughts. Mr Foley noted that it is the quality of the conversation and openness of the system that is key.

Q: Ms Turberville-Smith asked if feedback on the process is sought. Mr Foley confirmed that SLT sample targets and return to the line managers if they feel

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	<p>they are not robust enough.</p> <p>Ms Ullah took the opportunity to thank the Governors for their questions and input into the School Improvement Plan. <i>Questions have been answered as a team and Ms Ullah will circulate the answer document.</i></p> <p>Q: Ms Arthy asked if Ms Ullah will be replaced and if not, who will take over her responsibilities. Mr Foley confirmed that the responsibilities will be divided among the existing team as Ms Ullah is not being replaced for financial reasons. An Assistant Headteacher post will be advertised after Christmas. The SIP and SEF will be the main thrust of the new post, however, it will not be like for like. Mr Cornell will become responsible for the sixth form and performance management will become Ms Cheney's. Recruitment will be focussed internally, initially. Ms McKie advised Governors that Directors may look at recruiting someone to cover standards at MAT level once the MAT has grown sufficiently. Mr Foley noted that stability in the Senior Team has brought success and it is very important that we continue the work that Ms Ullah started and has established.</p>	NU
<b>19/71</b>	<p><b>Health and Safety Report (Item 8)</b> – circulated in advance, questions arising</p> <p>Q: Ms Arthy enquired as to why DT has the most amount of accidents. Ms Cheney explained that there is a significant amount of equipment in use and that many accidents are minor, for example, being pricked by a sewing machine needle.</p> <p>Q: Prof. Griffiths noted the downward trend in accidents and asked if there was a specific reason for this. Ms Cheney assured Governors that the equipment is being used as often as ever and suggests initial training of pupils has improved.</p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby asked if Health and Safety support is bought in. Mr Foley advised Governors that it can be, however, Mr Williams is the in-house Health and Safety Officer at present though he will be leaving at the end of term to take up a promotion at Bryanston School. He commented that Mr Williams has had tremendous impact during his time at the school and has worked his way up. He noted that it is equally good that this school has a reputation of developing staff so that they can go on and get fantastic promotions. Governors requested that their thanks and good luck wishes for Mr Williams be noted in the minutes.</p>	
<p><b>19/72</b> <b>19/72.1</b> <b>19/72.2</b>  <b>19/72.3</b> <b>19/72.4</b>          <b>19/72.5</b></p>	<p><b>Headteacher Report (Item 9)</b>– circulated in advance</p> <p><b>Numbers on role</b> – Stable</p> <p><b>Staffing</b> – Churn at county level with concerns around finance. The reprographics officer at THS is also leaving at the end of term so some reorganisation is required. The UCAS role has been a success.</p> <p><b>Curriculum</b> – Little will change</p> <p><b>Canteen</b> – Phenomenally busy with an increase in revenue of £28k year on year. The quality of food and improved facility are key to its success.</p> <p>Q: Mr Batt requested that Governors be invited to the staff Christmas Lunch. Ms Cheney asked Governors to let her know if they wish to attend. <i>Mrs Smyth was requested to send a reminder to Governors.</i></p> <p><b>Sixth Form Open Evening</b> – Applications are in line with last year at present. A complimentary comment from a parent was shared with Governors. He opined that it is the students that make the night successful, welcoming</p>	VS

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<p><b>19/72.6</b></p> <p><b>19/72.7</b></p>	<p>prospective students and showing them around. <i>Mr Grassby left the meeting at 17.46</i></p> <p><b>Standards</b> – The revision sessions have been revamped and this has been very powerful. They are targeted, though not just at disadvantaged pupils. They're not exclusive but are disproportionately boys and disadvantaged pupils.</p> <p>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith enquired as to take-up. Mr Hardinge confirmed that it had been good with at least 20 students, each with at least 1 parent, at each session.</p> <p>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith asked if they will continue. Mr Cornell confirmed that they will after Christmas. Mr Hardinge added that those that haven't performed in the mocks will be invited to attend and that it is key to get the right parents who will push and support their children. The sessions give them something for them to do with their children rather than feeling as though they don't know where to start for the best.</p> <p><b>Subject Areas</b> – Mr Cornell asked the subject areas to feed back what they felt it was important for the Governing Body to know.</p> <p>Q: Ms Arthy queried safeguarding. <i>Mr Cornell noted this and confirmed that he is meeting with Ms Chittenden and it will be a standing item in his reports thereafter.</i></p> <p><i>Mr Cornell reminded Governors of the forthcoming Carol Concert and requested that Mrs Smyth circulate a reminder</i></p>	<p>IC</p> <p>VS</p>
<p><b>19/73</b></p>	<p><b>MAT Update</b></p> <p>Mr Foley advised Governors that Damers has now joined the Trust with St Osmund's admission delayed until February due to the general election. The next tranche of schools will be considered in January/February.</p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby enquired as to how the extra work is being managed. Mr Foley noted that Damers is self-sufficient and the progress at Bere Regis is pleasing. Once the Trust reaches 7 schools, staffing will become a priority. He admitted that some staff will be a little more stretched in the interim. The Teaching School is almost a business in its own right, providing training and school to school support. Mr Foley thanked SLT for their amazing team approach. Mr Cornell commented that the school is doing a lot more than 10 years ago. Mr Batt commented on the dual role of CEO and Headteacher and that Directors are aware that this cannot continue forever. He assured Governors that a strategy is in place. Mrs McKie added that there are interim plans for each stage of growth. <i>Mr Foley informed Governors that the aim is to have a MAT of 20. He confirmed that Directors have asked him to map a staffing structure for 20 and is working on the interim steps. As soon as it is formulated and approved by Directors he will share it with Governors.</i></p> <p>Mr Foley asserted that the key is continuity, culture and values. Succession planning cannot be disjointed and this is very much in the minds of all with responsibility. He added that it is hoped that the budget will balance next year with the carry forward still in place.</p>	<p>MF</p>
<p><b>19/74</b></p>	<p><b>Link Governor Reports (Item 10)</b></p> <p>Ms Tuberville-Smith updated Governors respected her recent meeting with the SEN teacher responsible for students with physical disabilities. She advised Governors of the Teacher's aspirations for the future, including an ambitious capital project to improve the site. A meeting with Paul Scothern from the LA</p>	

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	<p>has taken place and there is a drive within the county to improve provision. A business case is required, particularly as a hydrotherapy pool is on the wish list. For this to come to fruition, it would need to be demonstrated that the pool would serve as many students as possible in order to increase the likelihood of funding. She expressed some concerns discussed regarding the suitability of the rest of the school should increased specialist provision be realised, for example, the small sizes of the classrooms, furniture heights etc. Mrs McKie explained that she was due to revisit this once SLT have considered whether this fits with wider school priorities. Mr Foley agreed that further work was needed, noting that St Mary's at Puddletown is having a £500k complex communications needs base created. He opined that it is worth drafting an outline plan.</p> <p>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith advised that there is now someone in the CCG who would be a suitable link. Wider issues need to be considered for example, are there higher demands for complex communications needs or mental health. She noted the issue raised with regards to equipment storage. Mr Foley confirmed that £65k funding had been awarded to install suitable storage and repair the lifts. Other items discussed was charity funding available for installing hydrotherapy pools vs the cost of running one.</p>	
<b>19/75</b>	<p><b>Training</b></p> <p>Ms Turberville-Smith advised Governors of her attendance at a Careers training session for Governors and that she will be meeting with Jon Dean in the New Year.</p> <p>Mrs Smyth referred Governors to the email circulated with feedback from the Chair's Briefing produced by Ms Roberts. She noted that it demonstrated the ability for Governors to share practice among peers within the MAT.</p>	
<b>19/76</b>	<p><b>Policies (Item 11) –</b> circulated in advance</p> <p>MAT Freedom of Information, Health and Safety, Capitalisation and Depreciation, Anti-Fraud and Corruption and the THS Relationships and Sex policies were received and noted by the Governing Body.</p>	
<b>19/77</b>	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>Merry Christmas and thanks for all your support and work during the year.</p> <p><i>Q: Governors requested that Ms Ullah circulate her performance management presentation slides</i></p>	NU

**Action Log**

Person	Action	Timing	Outcome/Update
Vicky Smyth	19/67 (Item3): Invite Jon Dean to the next meeting to discuss careers provision and Phil Eadie to the subsequent LGB Meeting	31/01/2020	Complete
Garry Batt and Mike Foley	19/68.1 (Item 4): Interview prospective candidates and put names forward to the LGB	ASAP	
Vicky Smyth	19/68.2 (Item 4): Produce an A4 breakdown of roles within the MAT and circulate to Governors	31/01/2020	Complete
Natasha Ullah	19/70 (Item 7): Circulate answers to SIP questions	ASAP	Complete

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Vicky Smyth	19/72.4: Remind Governors of Staff Christmas meal date	ASAP	Complete
Iain Cornell	19/72.7: Add safeguarding as a standing item to Headteacher's Report	Ongoing	
Vicky Smyth	19/72.7: Circulate a reminder about the Carol Concert	ASAP	Complete
Mike Foley	19/73: Circulate MAT staffing strategy for growth	ASAP	
Natasha Ullah	19/77: Circulate performance management slides	ASAP	Complete

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