

**The Conference Room, Thomas Hardy School – 10th October 2018 – 4.30pm
Meeting of the Thomas Hardy School Governing Body**

Present: Garry Batt (Chair), Rachel Turberville-Smith (Parent Governor), David Grassby, Tim Gallego, Tony Foot, Martin Baker, Helen Arthy (Parent Governor), Tom Hardinge (Staff Governor)

In attendance: Natasha Bousfield (Deputy Head), Laura Cheney (Assistant Head), Jan McKie (Finance Manager), Iain Cornell (Deputy Head), Linda Morrison (Assistant Head)

Apologies: Hugh Griffiths, Lynne Cove, Mike Faulkner (Staff Governor) and Jon Dean (Assistant Head)

Late Arrivals/Early Leavers: Simon Conibear (arrived during meeting)

Item	Minutes	Action
18/24	Declarations of Interest: None	
18/25	<p>Staff Speaker – Mel Orchard (SENCO) and Hayley Gale</p> <p>Ms Orchard showed Governors a video and explained the purpose and outcome of a Bronze level Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofEA) programme for Pathways students. She informed Governors that 10 students took part, all passed and all have some sort of learning or physical disability. She added that all of the participants are on the SEN register and several have Education Health Care Plans. Governors were informed that it was the first time the DofEA had been run for this group of students. The students retained their sense of humour and pulled together and particularly enjoyed cooking. Governors were advised that a lot of preparation had gone into getting the students 'expedition ready' for the walking and the camping out. One student had required that someone carry a chair behind them 'at the ready', however, minimal dispensations were made for their disabilities. The sense of achievement at the end was huge and by the final expedition they were like a different group to those who had done the practice. Governors were informed that the group had been started by a student with physical needs who couldn't walk very easily and had been told that he wouldn't be able to do it. He was determined and did lots of practice walks, including through the holidays, to prepare for the terrain. He was allowed a lighter backpack and lots of breaks but that was all. Governors were advised that socially, the expedition had made a massive change between the team and their attitudes and that the parents had been very supportive.</p> <p>Governors requested that their thanks to Ms Orchard and Ms Gale be recorded in the minutes.</p>	
18/26	<p>Minutes of 12th September 2018 were approved and signed as an accurate record.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Turberville-Smith has agreed to take the link role of careers • Mr Foley suggested that a review of THS examination data was required 	MF
18/27 18/27.1 18/27.2	<p>Headteacher's Report – This was tabled at the meeting</p> <p>Politics - Mr Foley noted that there had been no major announcements regarding education by any of the main parties at their party conferences.</p> <p>School Data – Ms Morrison updated Governors respecting changes from her last presentation. The Progress 8 score has increased from +0.50 to +0.55 and all ability ranges have improved considerably on last year. Unfortunately, the Progress 8 score for disadvantaged pupils has reduced but it was noted that if 6 out of 7 pupils whom the school had struggled to get to attend, had</p>	

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<p>18/27.3</p>	<p>been excluded from the score, it would result in a positive Progress 8 score and made a massive difference. Ms Morrison assured Governors that the school were acting to remedy this issue. Mr Cornell added that the response was perhaps not as co-ordinated across school as it could be. Children had been identified as requiring support and interventions put into place but they didn't make the difference required and staff are looking at how they can redress this. He stated that Pupil Premium, Deputy College Leaders, E4E, and Guidance Leaders need to work together in a more cohesive approach. Governors were informed that in one case, a social worker had not brought a pupil into school for their maths exam. Ms Morrison had undertaken analysis and found that half of the disadvantaged pupils across school had achieved a positive Progress 8 score but for the bottom 7, College interventions had made no difference. This is despite them having positive forecasts in Year 10. Attendance in this group is poor across Dorset and lies at the foundation of some of the problems. Governors were advised that the Deputy College Leaders need to concentrate on the 25% where they can make a real difference and then make other arrangements for the rest. It was stated that Governors need to push the team on the small things for incremental change, which can have a big impact. The low prior achievement group had also improved which was a success and better than last year.</p> <p>Finance and Resources – Mr Foley assured Governors that all due care is being taken by all parties regarding the dining room building works. The biggest issue presently is the use of a crane on site; risk assessments have been done and the pupils have had a day to practice using the narrowed and alternative routes around the school before the builders begin moving the steels.</p> <p>Q: Mr Baker enquired as to the school's relationship with the contractors. Mr Foley confirmed that it was much better than had been experienced in the past during works on other areas of the school. Ms Cheney added that Kendall Kingscott and Spetisbury Construction are very responsive and deal with the school's queries in a timely manner.</p> <p>Q: Mr Grassby referred back to 18/27.3 and asked whether the school were using 4 or 5 grades as benchmarks. Ms Morrison and Mr Cornell explained which grade was used in which context.</p>	
<p>18/28</p>	<p>Aims and Priorities of the MAT</p> <p>Mr Foley presented a powerpoint to Governors that covered what the structure was like in a Local Authority (LA) school, the introduction of single academies in 2010 and then Multi Academy Trusts and finally the school's conversion to Thomas Hardy Multi Academy Trust status in December 2015. He reminded Governors that the THMAT has been asked to sponsor Bere Regis Primary School as it is a responsibility for MATs to support struggling schools. Bere Regis will join on 1st December 2018 with Damers school expected to follow. Mr Foley's presentation also covered how MATs work. He explained that the Department for Education (DfE) preferred there not to be an overlap between the different layers of governance and at some point this would need to be resolved in THMAT to meet requirements. In addition, it would reassure schools that THS isn't getting preferential treatment. He noted that it is also important that governance positions are filled based on skills and not automatically from individual schools. Mr Foley added that Directors would be heavily involved in the appointment of headteachers, either solely or to directly support Governors. He explained that the Director group level should not be</p>	

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too big and that the name Thomas Hardy MAT had been chosen as it was felt that the Thomas Hardy moniker has credibility. The Directors have taken the view that the philosophy of the school will be passed on, to be clear about ethos, as well as the values which have also been taken from THS. He stated that the MAT appreciates a foundation level of commonality but would not seek to change every school to be like THS. Mr Foley informed Governors that the DASP MAT was not workable with the church schools or just with a group of small schools. He stated that the structure has to work financially. The church had said that they wanted 50% representation at every level and the Members and Directors did not want to take this line, so some of the interested schools were no longer viable. The Diocese had turned down an offer from the MAT to have one representative at every level. Mr Foley advised Governors that there had been funding issues for effective school improvement respecting other schools that the MAT were asked to support by the Regional Schools Commissioner. Mr Foley stated that the Directors were not prepared to put THS at risk in growing the MAT without have appropriate controls in place to minimise those risks. The MAT needs a good variety of schools, including large schools to balance smaller schools and good and outstanding schools to balance those that require school improvement intervention. Mr Foley informed Governors that he and Ms Johns, a Director, had been working on formulating a sustainable structure for the MAT, including good use of the £100k capacity grant that the MAT has been awarded. It was key that there is good succession planning for Governors and Directors as well as for school staff. He added that it was also key that THS never becomes complacent despite its Outstanding status and that it should always be moving forward. The focus is to grow and develop central services so that THMAT can support others and possibly charge out staff from THS. Mr Batt highlighted that the Directors are disappointed to still be a MAT of one and are refocussing towards available schools in the area. They do not want to be a MAT of only 2 by next year.

Q: Mr Conibear asked where the MAT is with DASP. Mr Foley explained that the MAT had been sidetracked by a protracted due diligence process on a school that they had been requested to support which was no longer going ahead. He added that money is pooled so the starter school is at risk, for example, if a property fails within the MAT. There are local examples of where things have gone wrong and it is a lesson for THMAT, that the lead school must remain strong.

Q: Mr Grassby enquired as to who does the due diligence. Mr Foley advised Governors of the consultants used by THMAT thus far.

Q: Mr Grassby enquired as to who paid for this work. Mr Foley explained that start up and school improvement funds are one source and that the MAT had also secured £100k growth funding as the DfE are keen that we, as an Outstanding school, support other schools. He added that the Teaching School status will need to be reapplied for in 18 months so THS have to keep up with good practice.

Q: Ms Arthy enquired as to Mr Foley's views on the political choice not proceed with the academies programme. Mr Foley felt that Brexit was a political priority at the moment and that as long as the Government were not intervening with existing academies then there is no need to be alarmed. It is possible that academy powers could be changed but there are unlikely to be significant changes. Ms Bousfield opined that LA's have been run down,

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	<p>however, DCC sends greater representation to DfE meetings than other LAs and shares information with schools. Mr Foley added that Governors need to make THS strong and for it to stay strong. It is possible that pupil numbers will be an issue in the future but the LA seem unwilling to engage with this conversation. The DCC Director of Education is only contracted until June. Mr Baker shared his thought that the LA would take more action in light of the primary school numbers bulge.</p> <p>Q: Mr Conibear queried working with Damers and Dorchester Middle School as an 'all through' offering.</p> <p>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith enquired as to how closely linked THS is with the Dorset Studio School. Mr Foley advised Governors that both Mike Faulkner and Mike Foley are Directors and Ms Chittenden is a Governor. He added that it would be difficult for them to join the MAT as they are on Kingston Maurward College land.</p> <p>Q: Mr Hardinge asked if MATs can join MATs. Mr Foley noted that the RSC thinks that the South West has too many small MATs and it is possible that they can join together. It would need to be a joint application and you can also come out of an agreement, however, everything would need Director (Trustee) agreement.</p>	
<p>18/29</p>	<p>School Improvement Plan (SIP)</p> <p>Ms Bousfield gave Governors a presentation and informed them that the SIP focusses on school standards. There had been a grid marking process but now the school is in year 3 of the cycle there has been a slight change in nuance. The feedback and staff surveys have been taken into account and they are checking if the objectives are still relevant. The school was heavily data focused but is now centring on ensuring that delivery in the classroom is appropriate for student needs; quality first teaching to get the best outcomes. She informed Governors that they had found issues with behaviour for learning and that the school was relatively good compared to others but that there was still a need to manage effectively. Groups of staff are dealing with very focussed improvements. Ms Bousfield informed Governors that the school has weathered the curriculum storm well and maintained its standards in the midst of curriculum change. There is still more to be done at Key Stage 3 and there are clear objectives bespoke to each area. Ms Bousfield advised Governors that the grid will be presented again at the next meeting and then there will be a full review for the next 3 year cycle.</p> <p>Q: Mr Baker enquired as to where the disadvantaged students fit in. Ms Bousfield explained that the objectives will be applied to that area among others via the plan and the grid will report on what action has been taken and how effective it has been. She added that the Teaching School underpins this and that everything is interlinked.</p> <p>Q: Mr Baker asked as to how staff get external influence to impact their practice. Ms Baker informed Governors that this is mapped out with Dr Ennion with regards to research possibilities and that the Teaching School increases opportunities for this.</p>	
<p>18/30</p>	<p>Governors Visits</p> <p>Ms Bousfield thanked Ms Turberville-Smith and reminded Governors of the link meeting on the 30th October. A paper was tabled detailing areas of responsibilities and representatives. Governors were reminded of the walkabout between 9 and 11 with Mr Cornell on the 13th November, focussing on the start of year timetable/integration as well as the self-review session for</p>	

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	Governors on the 20 th November from 5pm- 6.30pm. Mr Foley thanked Mr Batt and Ms Arthy for attending the CCF event.	
18/31 18/31.1	Finance Mrs McKie presented the reports and explained the Cashflow headings and changes in the 5-year budget plan. This has improved, due to altering Teachers' Pensions forecasts and factoring in pay award funding from the Government. The 2018/19 budget is now forecasting a £334k deficit. The funding for salary increase is only included for the 2 years promised. The budget statement is only provisional and full end of September figures will be circulated next week, but there are no concerns at this early stage about any of the budget lines. Ms Turberville-Smith and Ms Arthy will be visiting Mrs McKie to find out more about budget setting and monitoring. Mrs McKie will also be meeting with Mr Haines, a Director of the MAT, about the most helpful way to report figures, including using Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). Q: Mr Grassby enquired as to additional funding. Mr Foley and Mrs McKie responded by explaining that they had not factored in any unsecure finding streams from the Government, even though they believe that some element of the pay award funding will continue and possibly for other on-cost support such as Teachers' pensions. There was general discussion respecting national funding. A question was asked regarding income revenue from the canteen. Mrs McKie had factored in a drop in expenditure and income to account for the disruption caused by building work on the dining room but the canteen had achieved record days in income last week. Mrs McKie will review this.	JM/VS
18/31.2	Investments – A decision on investments will be brought to the meeting on the 5 th December as £1,050,000 matures on the 10 th December. Mrs McKie and Mr Gallego will meet to discuss on the 6 th November and formulate a proposal. Mrs Smyth to add to next agenda.	JM/VS
18/31.3	Asset Report – Mrs McKie requested some thought from Governors as to what level of information they would like in future regarding maintenance reports and programmes, for example, details of the surveys that had taken place in the last year and their resultant actions. An outline of the Window Replacement CIF bid was shared and the Fixed Assets register was explained, with the intention of a more detailed inventory to be reinstated as much as possible within the next year. Mrs McKie assured Governors that the IT records are already good. Mr Grassby commented that what has been given thus far is more comprehensive than in the past.	
18/32	Any other business Date of Next meeting – 05/12/18	

Action Log

Person	Action	Timing	Outcome/Update
Mike Foley	Review of examination data	ASAP	
Jan McKie/Vicky Smyth	Circulate September figures	17/10/18	
Jan McKie	Prepare investments proposal	21/11/18	
Vicky Smyth	Add to next agenda	21/11/18	
Governors	Consider level of information required in Asset Reports for Governors	ASAP	

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