

**The Conference Room, Thomas Hardy School – 5th February 2020 – 4.30pm
Meeting of the Thomas Hardy School Governing Body**

Present: David Grassby, Tim Gallego, Tom Hardinge, Rachel Turberville-Smith, Mike Faulkner, Helen Arthy, Mike Foley (Headteacher), Garry Batt (Chair)

In attendance: Vicky Smyth (Clerk), Jan McKie (Finance Director), Laura Cheney (Assistant Headteacher), Iain Cornell (Deputy Headteacher), Kaye Chittenden (Assistant Headteacher), Tim Ennion (Assistant Headteacher), Jon Dean (Assistant Headteacher)

Apologies (Item 1): Hugh Griffiths – trains, Simon Conibear – London

Late Arrivals/Early Leavers: Tim Ennion and Jon Dean – arrive 5pm (training and revision sessions), Kaye Chittenden - leave early

Item	Minutes	Action
19/107	Declaration of Business Interests (Item 2): None	
19/108	Minutes of the meeting 11th December 2019 (Item 3a): were approved and signed as an accurate record	
19/108.1	Matters arising (Item 3b): MAT Update - <i>Q: Ms Arthy enquired as to the MAT update, specifically, the aim to have 20 schools in the MAT. Mr Foley confirmed that the main aim was still to have a MAT based on DASP but to work with others also. St Osmund's will be joining on the 1st March and discussions with DMS, Broadmayne and Purbeck Schools are ongoing. He assured Governors that the Directors are working to a strategy including maintaining a balanced MAT. Mr Batt added that the Trust had recently had its annual review with the DfE, which had largely been positively, with the only criticism that the Trust is too cautious and slow to grow. Mr Foley concluded that the MAT would be foolish not to consider a good school that would add to the capacity of the MAT if they wished to join.</i>	
19/108.2	Physical Needs Base - <i>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith enquired as to progress with the physical disability base. Mr Foley confirmed that there had been no further progress. There is no funding available, either through the LA or elsewhere at present. Mrs McKie confirmed that a building has been selected for the equipment and contractors are currently quoting for construction. The lifts will also be improved.</i>	
19/108.3	Recruitment – Mr Batt confirmed that Ms Finley has volunteered to serve on the Governors and will attend the next meeting as an observer. Mr Foley and Mr Batt have met with her and recommend her appointment at this time. <i>Mr Batt requested that Governors continue their recruitment efforts.</i>	GOVS
19/108.4	A4 roles breakdown – <i>Mrs Smyth agreed to circulate asap</i>	VS
19/108.5	Performance Management Slides and Governors SIP Question Responses – <i>Mrs Smyth confirmed that she had not received these electronically from Ms Ullah prior to her leaving and would chase. Mr Foley is to provide new email address.</i>	
19/108.6	<i>Mr Foley agreed to circulate MAT staffing structure</i>	MF/VS MF/VS
19/109	Safeguarding Audit Report (Item 4) Mrs Chittenden advised Governors that the audit process had changed this year. The questionnaire had been bigger despite the LA promising to make	

Signature:



Date: 13/05/20

1

**The Conference Room, Thomas Hardy School – 5th February 2020 – 4.30pm
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the process easier to complete. Mrs Chittenden requested that her thanks to Ms Arthy and the guidance team for their support in completing the audit be recorded in the minutes and asked if Governors had any questions.

Q: Mr Grassby asked whether there was a guidance leader for sixth form students now. Mr Foley confirmed that the senior management team are still considering this.

Q: Mr Grassby requested the likelihood of this being put in place. Mr Foley stated it was good. Ms Chittenden agreed that it was an area that had been lacking. Some students are coming back to the guidance team for support in sixth form but they are at capacity with the lower school students.

Q: Ms Tuberville-Smith enquired as to the position with counsellors. Mrs Chittenden confirmed that there is provision for once a week for a set number of hours.

Q: Ms Tuberville-Smith enquired as to how this is funded. Mr Foley confirmed that the school pays from its budget. The role is subcontracted and costs approximately £7237 last year.

Q: Ms Arthy asked how many students can access per week. Mr Foley confirmed it was 6-7. Ms Chittenden added that the Guidance team was particularly useful as they are there all the time; Mondays and Fridays are always busiest.

Q: Mr Grassby asked whether the guidance leaders teach. Mr Foley confirmed that they do not, and that a teacher performing a mainly pastoral role would be very costly.

Ms Chittenden highlighted that safer recruitment must be repeated every 3 years now instead of 5.

Q: Ms Arthy highlighted the need for supervision for the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. This is a serious job with huge issues. Ms Arthy confirmed she had attended a OneLogic briefing at which this had also been highlighted.

Q: Ms Tuberville-Smith enquired as to whether the LA Safeguarding Team offered support. Ms Chittenden confirmed that they did not and that supervision had been investigated but was very costly.

Q: Ms Arthy opined that periodic supervision is a requirement within the NHS and noted the importance of succession planning, particularly in light of the impending departure of Ms Orchard and Ms Chittenden's retirement. Mr Foley assured Governors that the senior management team are looking at this.

Ms Arthy summarised the key issues she had noted during completing this audit with Ms Chittenden – absence from school, mental health issues and issues with phones. She added that the school is dealing with a significant number of students under CAMHS. Mr Cornell added that approximately 80 students are affected. Many are not physically able to come into school, which is affecting attendance. The school is linking with CAMHS, receiving 2 hours per week in 15-minute slots and is sending work home for students. Mr Hardinge added that there are limited alternative provision options. Ms Chittenden agreed, stating that any alternative provision on offer is full.

Q: Ms Arthy added that the implications for attendance and how to address this are a challenge. Ms Chittenden agreed, noting that staff had starting visiting at home but that this takes significant time.

Signature:



Date: 13/05/20

2

**The Conference Room, Thomas Hardy School – 5th February 2020 – 4.30pm
Meeting of the Thomas Hardy School Governing Body**

	<p>Mr Batt observed that a problem has been identified but Governors would need a recommendation for resolution.</p> <p><i>Q: Ms Turbeville-Smith commented that THS seems more supportive than most schools in her experience. Ms Chittenden agreed that THS is very lucky to have a CAMHS worker for 2 hours per week as other schools do not have this.</i></p> <p><i>Q: Mr Cornell opined that a blueprint for change in Dorset is needed. EHCPs have increased by 25% in one year. Some of the students unable to get into school will have EHCPs.</i></p> <p><i>Q: Ms Turbeville-Smith enquired as to support for parents. Ms Chittenden confirmed that the school works with the Family Partnership Zone. Parenting courses are offered via them. The school also links with local youth groups. Ms Chittenden invited Governors to attend the Prevent training on 14th February at THS 11.30-12.30. This also has to be updated every 3 years. Mrs Smyth to check training records and remind Governors as to which courses they need to attend.</i></p> <p>Ms Chittenden informed Governors of the County Lines issue locally and that students have been involved.</p> <p><i>Q: Ms Arthy enquired as to the level of support from external agencies. Ms Chittenden noted that the response of social services had been less than impressive but that support from the safer schools team of the police is good. They visit a lot and communication is key. Governors thanked Ms Chittenden and Ms Arthy for their work here. Ms Chittenden left the meeting.</i></p>	VS
19/110	<p>Careers – Jon Dean (Item 6)</p> <p>Mr Dean gave a presentation on the regulation requirements and the present position of the school. He explained that the government have pushed careers to the forefront and that this is a more important part of the Ofsted framework. Feedback from two recent Middle School inspections is that the careers leader spent approximately 45 minutes with inspectors and the quality of provision was an issue picked up in both reports. Mr Dean shared the schools destination data, an important factor for Ofsted. For Year 11, the NEET (Not in Education, Employment and Training) rate is 0.9%. This equated to 4 students, 2 of which were working, just not full time or with training. In year 13 the NEET rate is 1.44%, most of whom are working without training though 14 students were uncontactable.</p> <p><i>Q: Mr Grassby asked if this includes gap year students. Mr Dean confirmed that it does not as there is a separate category to account for this. Mr Dean went through other specific events including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DASH - a scheme aimed at girls with a slant towards engineering that 60 pupils attended • a visit to Poundbury construction site that 35 pupils attended also aimed at girls but both events open to all • employability sessions for Year 10 and 11 pupils identified as at risk of being NEET by their tutors. <p>There has been good feedback for the careers sessions delivered in tutor groups; this was the first time the school had done this and students felt it was easier to ask questions this way. Post 16 sessions have a wide variety of alternative education providers attending. This wouldn't have occurred a few years ago but the school has good links with colleges now such as Weymouth,</p>	

Signature:



Date: 13/05/20

3

**The Conference Room, Thomas Hardy School – 5th February 2020 – 4.30pm
Meeting of the Thomas Hardy School Governing Body**

	<p>Kingston Maurward and Bournemouth and Poole. Mr Dean then demonstrated the schools progress against meeting the Gatsby benchmarks vs the status of schools nationally. He completes a questionnaire termly with Careers and Enterprise Company.</p> <p><i>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith enquired as to what counts as a 'stable careers programme'.</i> Mr Dean explained that there are facets to each benchmark, such as website, are staff aware, parental involvement.</p> <p>Mr Dean shared future actions with governors including plans to raise parental awareness and a staff audit in the summer term when there is more time to think about links. He opined that the biggest challenge is still providing meaningful experience of workplaces to students. Some schools offer work experience weeks but this has never been the case at THS due to the size of the year groups. There are other issues such as students living in rural locations and whether all work experience is meaningful. Consideration has been given to whether pupil premium students should be arranged work experience but there are concerns that some of these students inevitably have greater needs and may not be autonomous enough to source meaningful work experience, making the undertaking expensive.</p> <p><i>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith asked whether students already working are included.</i> Mr Dean explained that this used to count as meaningful work experience but not any longer. However, if a student organises their own work experience, an internship during holidays for example, this will count.</p> <p><i>Q: Mr Grassby observed that he gets fewer approaches from students now.</i> Mr Dean opined that this could be linked to greater publicity respecting health and safety, employment law etc that has spurred a rise in companies that market services for assessing placements at a cost. He agreed that high and medium risk places of employment such as butchery, construction and farming are less likely to accept work experience students. Mr Dean opined that work visits could achieve more, for example, those considering a career and studying in leisure could attend a visit at a local Haven, go on a tour, meet workers and see what a day entails. He stressed the experience must be meaningful.</p> <p><i>Q: Ms Arthy asked if 2 weeks is the recommended length of time for work experience.</i> Mr Dean confirmed that it could be long or short as long as it is meaningful. External Careers Education Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) is another requirement. The school currently has a Level 6 qualified careers worker for 1 day per week from Ansbury at a cost of £14k per year. This is not enough to get through all students. Perhaps there will be an opportunity once the MAT grows, especially as the middle schools need to provide careers education from Year 7 and they are struggling to drive this.</p> <p><i>Q: Ms Arthy questioned the value of careers education with year 7 and 8 pupils.</i> Mr Dean agreed that value correlates to quality. Working on soft skills and transferable skills is valuable; looking at a range of jobs is not as valuable. Mr Dean added that the upcoming careers week has a theme of 'jobs of the future'. There was further discussion about the pros and cons of work experience and Governors thanked Mr Dean for his efforts.</p>	
<p>19/111</p>	<p>Parent Focus Group (Item 5) – Dr Tim Ennion Dr Ennion gave Governors a presentation respecting parent voice. He explained to Governors that the Parent Focus Group is introduced during the</p>	

Signature:



Date: 13/05/20

4

**The Conference Room, Thomas Hardy School – 5th February 2020 – 4.30pm
Meeting of the Thomas Hardy School Governing Body**

	<p>Year 8 parent transition evening. He confirmed that he is very open with the group and that there is no point doing this if you are not going to be transparent. There is no Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) at THS. The focus group meets half-termly but parents are encouraged to email between meetings and to shape the agendas of the meeting. The biggest challenge is getting parents to participate. Two big questions are: getting a sustained turnout and getting a representative sample. Issues such as lack of time and negative own experience of school can be factors that limit parents ability to engage. Dr Ennion discussed the impact and gave examples of change as a result of focus group activity. Some parents have contributed to mentoring days and the focus group tested the parent portal before it was launched. He added that the parents complete a SWOT analysis as part of the school improvement plan, as do staff, students and Governors.</p> <p><i>Q: Ms Arthy asked how many parents attend.</i> Dr Ennion responded between 10 and 12 on average. Communication is a key gripe with parents and is difficult to get right, some complain too much and some too little. Another issue that comes up is the desire of parents to support the school more financially or by contributing their expertise – an example of this is the lawyer who worked with Mr Scott on the Data Protection policy. Dr Ennion explained the parent portal survey and shared results. He explained that anything negative sends an email alert to himself and Ms Chittenden to be dealt with immediately.</p> <p><i>Mr Faulkner left the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith enquired as to sixth form parent focus group.</i> Dr Ennion confirmed that there is no reason why they cannot attend the main parent focus group if they so wish.</p> <p>Governors discussed the merits of a paper parent survey at an event such as parents evening to gain greater responses.</p> <p><i>Q: Mr Grassby commented on the positive nature of the responses the school has at present.</i> Governors thanked Dr Ennion for his work with parents.</p>	
<p>19/112</p> <p>19/112.1</p> <p>19/112.2</p>	<p>Headteachers Report (Item 7) – Circulated in advance – Questions arising</p> <p>Numbers - <i>Q: Ms Arthy asked if SLT are happy with pupil numbers.</i> Mr Foley confirmed that 460-465 is the correct number of pupils for the lower school. He commented that the extra class at St Osmund’s is starting to feed through and there are more applicants than places. He reminded Governors that they had discussed this several years ago with Ed Denham of Dorset Council but he had assured them that there would be no issues for THS. Mr Foley commented on the time it takes to attend admissions appeals.</p> <p>Budget – Mrs McKie advised Governors that information at the moment indicates a slight increase in funding with £550k extra, however, caution is still needed as the high needs funding locally is a mess. Sixth form numbers are also likely to reduce back to previous levels as schools in Weymouth improve. Funding of teacher pay rises is yet unknown, as is the situation with teacher pensions. Should the school be in a position to increase spending, there are many areas that could benefit. For example, school laptops haven’t been replaced in 7 years and recruitment could also be considered as some areas could benefit from increased staffing.</p>	

Signature:



Date: 13/05/20

5

**The Conference Room, Thomas Hardy School – 5th February 2020 – 4.30pm
Meeting of the Thomas Hardy School Governing Body**

19/112.3	Standards – Predictions for Year 11 are looking slightly better than for Year 13. Year 11 is in line with last year. There are a significant number of mental health issues in this year group, though their work ethic is good. Less students are taking triple science and more are taking double science, to create better opportunities. A new tracking system is in place for those at risk of falling away. The Year 13 mock results were not quite as good as last year. Curriculum areas are monitoring and meeting individual students. <i>Q: Ms Arthy queried whether it was a case of managing expectations for example, Geography.</i> Mr Hardinge confirmed that the bar has been set high for grades in the mocks and that coursework has been finished earlier. The same score was predicted last year but actual exam results produced a 3 T-Score. Governors agreed that it is important to have these conversations.	
19/113	Curriculum Options (Item 8) Mr Cornell confirmed that there are no changes. Only 5 students took the GCSE Media option so this will be withdrawn as it is not viable. <i>Q: Mr Batt queried whether subjects like music will be vulnerable under this principle.</i> Mr Cornell assured Mr Batt SLT would not remove this subject as it would change the school. He reminded Governors that they had agreed changes that allowed performing arts to be chosen as an option more easily.	
19/114	Monitor School Improvement Plan (Item 9) <i>Mr Foley asked for the SIP to be deferred to the next agenda.</i>	VS
19/115	Finance and Operations Update (Item 10) <i>Next agenda.</i> Mrs McKie explained that much work has taken place to separate the MAT and school staffing more accurately. <i>Governors agreed for finance to be earlier in the agenda at the next meeting.</i>	VS
19/116	Policies (Item 11) – To be circulated by email prior to next meeting	VS
19/117	Any other business <i>Q: Ms Turberville-Smith enquired as to arrangement respecting some of Ms Ullah's responsibilities, such as arranging Governor Visits. Mr Foley agreed to update Governors at the March meeting.</i>	MF

Action Log

Person	Action	Timing	Outcome/Update
Governors	19/108.3 (Item 3b): Continue efforts to seek out new Governors to join the Board	Ongoing	
Vicky Smyth	19/108.4 (Item 3b): A4 Roles breakdown of Members, Directors and Governors	ASAP	Sent with minutes
Mike Foley/Vicky Smyth	19/108.5 (Item 3b): Circulate SIP Questions and Performance Management Report from Ms Ullah. Mr Foley to forward new email address.	ASAP	Sent with minutes
Mike Foley /Vicky Smyth	19/108.6 Item 3b): Circulate MAT staffing structure	ASAP	Sent with minutes
Vicky Smyth	19/109 (Item 4): Check training records and remind Governors of	ASAP	Complete

Signature:



Date: 13/05/20

6

**The Conference Room, Thomas Hardy School – 5th February 2020 – 4.30pm
Meeting of the Thomas Hardy School Governing Body**

	statutory courses		
Mike Foley	19/114 (Item 9): Add School Improvement Plan to next agenda	March meeting	Complete
Vicky Smyth	19/115 (Item 10): Put Finance at the top of the agenda	March meeting	Complete
Vicky Smyth	19/116 (Item 11): Circulate policies prior to next meeting	ASAP	Complete
Mike Foley	19/117: Update Governors as to who is taking over Ms Ullah's responsibilities include arranging Governors Visits	March meeting	

Signature:

Date: 13/05/20

7