

Thomas Alleyne's High School, Uttoxeter

Minutes of a meeting of the Learning and Standards committee held remotely (via Zoom) on Tuesday, 12 May 2020 at 5.00pm.

Present:

Dr M Jary (chair), Mr A Barton, Mr S Clarke, Mr M Cruddas, Mrs B Davies, Mr T Hollins, Ms R Horry, Mr M Osborne-Town, Mrs L Perry, Mr M Prescott.

Mrs J Rudge (Headteacher)

Also in Attendance:

Mrs A Maingay (Deputy Headteacher)
Mrs R Lindsay (Assistant Headteacher)
Mr J Mitchell (Assistant Headteacher)
Mrs E Peers (Assistant Headteacher/Head of English)
Mrs E Young (Deputy Head of VI Form)

Mr R Sheldon (Clerk to the Governing Body)

157. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest relevant to agenda items.

158. Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting of the Learning and Standards committee held on 14 January 2020 had been previously made available to governors in Office 365.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting be received and approved as presented.

159. Matters Arising:

- a) NPQH Presentation (Minute 144 refers)
The headteacher was pleased to report that Mr Holden had successfully completed his NPQH.
- b) Claire Catterall (Minute 150)
The chair reported that she was to write to Claire Catterall to thank her for the help and support previously given to the school.
- c) English Post (Minute 150 refers)
The headteacher reported that an advert had been issued for the English post and thanked those governors who had offered to support the interviews to be held shortly.
- d) 1:1 English/Maths Tuition (Minute 151 refers)
The headteacher reported that given the current circumstances at the school a decision had been taken to continue with the 1:1 tuition for English and Maths.

e) Social Media Incident (Minute 153(a) refers)

The headteacher reported that the social media incident referred to at the previous meeting had been fully resolved with all appropriate actions taken.

160. Teaching and Learning and Pastoral Care During School Closure:

Mrs Lindsay gave an update on the arrangements for virtual learning and a report was circulated to show how the teaching and learning for students was being monitored. An outline was given of the work being undertaken by staff to mentor students, including ongoing training and the sharing of good practice. There has been positive feedback from parents regarding the teaching and learning provided and the communication between school and home. Confirmation was given that staff continue to check that all students access the work set and the homework assignments and all students are contacted every two weeks. Vulnerable students were contacted more frequently and, where necessary, on a daily basis. Around 60% of students were fully engaged with the GCSE pod. It was acknowledged, however, that the completion rate for student work was higher for those in the top sets.

Discussion followed and governors asked whether it would be possible for a report to be provided that was able to show the progress currently being made by students as a comparison against progress that would have been expected had the school been operating in normal conditions. The headteacher undertook to provide such a report based on English, Maths and Science outcomes.

Mrs Maingay outlined the pastoral support provided for students and a spreadsheet made available to show how they were being mentored. The spreadsheet was monitored on a daily basis and any identified issues, including safeguarding concerns, were picked up with help also given by education welfare if necessary. As previously reported, data capture was also monitored and where any decline was noticed staff looked into the possible reasons for this. If considered necessary, different teaching and learning procedures were then identified for the student in question.

Full discussion followed and governors sought clarification around the following issues:

- Teacher involvement – the headteacher confirmed that teacher involvement in the virtual learning process did differ but that very few concerns had been expressed by parents. Staff meetings were held on a regular basis and heads of department supported staff as necessary, but the vast majority of staff were coping well with the situation. The headteacher also reported that she was tracking what was happening at similar schools to further improve virtual learning arrangements.
- Success criteria – the headteacher reported that she didn't want virtual teaching and learning to be too prescriptive and therefore acknowledged that that it would be a challenge to determine success criteria particularly as it also wasn't known how long the arrangements would continue for. The headteacher undertook, however, to discuss this with the senior team and to report back at a future meeting.
- Attendance of vulnerable students – an outline was given of the number of vulnerable students eligible to attend school and their attendance record. This information was provided to the local authority, as required, on a weekly basis.
- Student admissions – the headteacher reported that guidance for the admission of pupils to key worker schools had not changed and it was therefore not possible for parents to request admission for their child to attend school. However, vulnerable students would continue to be admitted where considered appropriate. The

headteacher further reported that with plans being made for the partial re-opening of schools it was likely that there would be an increase in the admission of teachers' children.

- School re-opening – the headteacher reported that consideration was already being given to the assessment of students, which would not just be around academic capability, to ensure that proper account was given to the learning needs of students when returning to school on a full-time basis.

It was resolved –

- i) That governors thank the headteacher and members of the senior team for the arrangements put in place for the virtual learning, and pastoral support, available to all students.
- ii) That the headteacher be requested to provide reports as necessary to show the impact of the requirement for virtual learning in comparison with the usual teaching practice.

161. Award of Grades (GCSE/A Level/BTEC):

Mrs Peers outlined the process that had been put into place to allocate the exam grades to students, which fully took into account the information provided by each of the departments. In providing the appropriate information, each department took into account any local and national guidance received and the senior team was confident that a robust and consistent system had been put in place. All students would receive a fair and accurate grade and an evidence bank also being put in place to support the award allocated. The headteacher further reported that a moderation process was in place and being followed as necessary. The headteacher also wished to place on record her thanks to Mrs Peers for all of the work that she was doing to ensure that a robust and consistent system was in place and for advising and supporting all staff with this process.

Discussion followed, with particular reference to the implications for student outcomes in the underperforming departments. The headteacher reminded governors that improvement strategies had been previously put in place for those departments. As discussed at previous meetings, the governors noted in particular the positive impact of the improvement strategies for the English department but the implications of the need to award grades at this moment in time was recognised. Governors acknowledged that this was a challenge for all schools and would keep under review.

It was resolved –

That governors note the system in place to award exam grades and also place on record their thanks to Mrs Peers for the work she was undertaking.

162. Staffing and Vacancies:

The headteacher gave an update on the school's staffing establishment and reported that adverts had been placed for posts in the Maths, English and MfL departments. Governors were also informed that some posts had been advertised to cover members of staff being interviewed elsewhere and that it may not be necessary for interviews to go ahead. Thanks were given to those governors who had agreed to support the interviews.

A report had been previously made available in Office 365 to show the number of lessons taught by members of staff across all subject areas. The headteacher reported that this document was used to identify those subject areas where further staffing may be required in the future and was therefore closely monitored. The headteacher was pleased to report, however, that the school was currently well placed for a full staffing complement in September 2020.

It was resolved –

That the 2020/21 staffing establishment be received and noted.

163. Safeguarding Action Plan:

A copy of the action plan following the recent 175 safeguarding audit had been previously made available in Office 365 and Mrs Maingay went through the detail of it. The audit had identified some areas where it was recommended to improve school procedures and Mrs Maingay confirmed that appropriate actions had been put in place to bring about the required improvement.

It was resolved –

That the Safeguarding action plan be received and noted, with particular thanks to Mrs Maingay for ensuring that appropriate action was being as taken.

164. Performance Management of Support Staff:

The headteacher reported that trustees were currently considering arrangements for teacher appraisal and would take account of Government and union advice before taking any final decisions regarding the process. The headteacher further reported, however, that the performance management of support staff followed a different process and that she wished to continue with the usual arrangements, whilst being mindful of union advice.

It was resolved –

That governors approve the continuation of the performance management process for support staff but that account should be taken of any advice received from trustees or unions.

165. Policy Review:

The following policies had been previously made available in Office 365 and the headteacher confirmed that most policies were as previously approved and with no revision necessary. The Safeguarding Support and Supervision policy had been updated to reflect findings from the recent 175 audit, as previously discussed:

- Safeguarding Support and Supervision
- Online Teaching and Learning
- CEIAG policy and CEIAG provider access policy
- NQT policy
- Attendance policy
- Curriculum policy
- Performance Management (Teachers) policy
- PREVENT policy
- Equality policy and statement

The committee chair further reported that she had read all of the policies and had identified one or two minor 'typos' requiring correction. Otherwise she was happy to recommend that all policies be approved.

It was resolved –

That all the above policies be received and approved.

166. Any Other Business:

a) Dr M Jary

Governors noted that this was the final meeting of the Learning and Standards committee before Dr Jary stood down as governor at the end of the current school year. The occasion would be formally marked by full governors at that time but committee members wished to place on record their thanks to Dr Jary for the help and support she had given to the school and governing body for over 20 years.

In response, Dr Jary also wished to record her thanks for the support that committee members, and all other governors, had given to her during this time.

b) Record of Thanks

The headteacher thanked governors for the full support given to the school at this difficult period in time and also thanked their willingness to attend the remote meetings being arranged.

Governors also wished to place on record their thanks to the headteacher and all other members of staff for their hard work to ensure the continued teaching and learning for all students through the virtual learning platform and to also ensure the health and wellbeing of those children of key workers attending school.

167. Confidentiality:

Governors were reminded about the need for confidentiality with regard to a number of documents discussed during the meeting but it was agreed that there was no need for any of the issues to be recorded in a confidential appendix.

168. Consideration Given to KPIs:

The KPIs covered during this meeting included:

KPI 4 – Governors provide challenge and hold the headteacher and other senior leaders to account for the improving quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and their behaviour and safety

Covered through the full discussions and assurances sought from the headteacher that teaching and learning continued to be available for all students through the virtual learning platform. The headteacher was asked to provide a report to show the impact of virtual learning in comparison with the normal teaching and learning. (Minute 160)

KPI5 – Governors use Performance Management systems, including the performance management of the headteacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management

Governors had given approval for the support staff performance management process to continue. (Minute 164)

169. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Learning and Standards committee was to be held early in the new school year although a date was still to be determined.

M Cruddas
Signed.....

15 September 2020
Date.....