

Thomas Alleyne's High School, Uttoxeter

Minutes of a remote meeting (via Zoom) of the governing body held on Thursday, 2 April 2020 at 4.15 pm.

Present:

Mr M Prescott (chair), Mr M Cruddas, Mrs B Davies, Dr M Jary, Mr M Osborne-Town, Mr P Taylor.

Mrs J Rudge (Headteacher)

Also in Attendance:

Mrs A Maingay (Deputy Headteacher)

Mr A Storer (Business Manager)

Mr R Sheldon (Clerk to the Governing Body)

213. Introduction to Meeting:

Mrs Rudge, headteacher, thanked governors for attending this remote meeting which had been arranged to update governors on arrangements that had been put in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of all staff and students, both on or off site. The views of governors on other key issues were also required.

214: Coronavirus and Safeguarding:

The headteacher reported that the school had moved into a virtual setting due to the coronavirus and it had therefore been necessary to revise the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy as necessary. Changes were being made to reflect local and national guidance and the purpose was to ensure the health and wellbeing of all students, and in particular the more vulnerable students and looked-after children, whether in attendance at school or at home. A copy of the updated Safeguarding and Child Protection policy had been previously made available in Office 365 and Mrs Maingay, deputy headteacher and designated safeguarding lead, highlighted to governors the key changes that had been made.

The headteacher confirmed that the school remained open for vulnerable students and children of key workers although only a small number of students were on site. A rota of school key workers was put in place at the start of each day and staff knew who to contact should it be necessary. Any reported concerns were monitored daily with all appropriate action taken. Although there was a particular focus on vulnerable students, with social workers kept informed as appropriate, contact was also being made with every other student on a regular basis. Work was set for students through the learning portal and staff were able to identify the number of times that students were accessing the portal. The headteacher had previously made available, through Office 365, a mentoring report that was being used to evidence the contact being made with individual students and the work being undertaken. Contact was also made with parents if any student concerns were identified. The headteacher placed on record her thanks and appreciation to all members of staff for their commitment to mentor and support all students during such a difficult time.

Discussion took place around all procedures that had been put in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of all students and the arrangements made to monitor this on a regular basis. Governors also welcomed the learning opportunities that continued to be made available through the learning portal. Governors also noted that all schools in the ULT continued to remain open although the possible setting up of a hub school at a point in the future

remained under review. The headteacher confirmed that student attendance figures were submitted to the DfE, as required, on a daily basis.

It was resolved –

- i) That governors approve the updated Safeguarding and Child Protection policy with thanks in particular to Mrs Maingay.
- ii) That governors also place on record their appreciation to the headteacher and all other members of staff for everything that they were doing to mentor and support the students.

215. School Issues and Financial Implications:

The headteacher firstly thanked Mr Taylor, chair of the managing and resourcing committee, for the help and support he was giving to the school. He had also raised a number of questions relating to school finances and any possible implications for maintenance projects. A written response had been given to the questions by Mr Storer, business manager, details of which had been previously made available in Office 365.

The headteacher reported that health and safety matters were currently the biggest challenge to staff in terms of workload and therefore a key priority. A staff briefing was held each morning to ensure that everyone stayed safe whilst on the school site. Adjustments continued to be made to reflect changes to school procedures due to the vastly reduced site and policies, including in particular the fire policy, were being revised accordingly. Mandatory testing continued to remain in place although in some areas changes to procedures were being made where it was considered safe to do so. All maintenance work had been suspended. With regard to the roof repairs, funded through the successful CIF bid, the remainder of the work was being kept under review and the business manager had asked the ESFA if the project could be carried over into the next financial year if considered appropriate. A response was awaited.

The headteacher also reported on other decisions taken, including the payment of staff. This included a decision for all staff to continue to be paid, including exam invigilators and 1:1 tutors, other than supply staff employed through agencies. Consideration was being given as to how these members of staff could be used remotely.

Discussion followed and governors also asked about the exam fees, which had already been paid by the school, and whether they were likely to be re-funded. The headteacher confirmed that clarification around the possible re-funding of exam fees was awaited and would let governors know as soon as a decision was known. The business manager was using a spreadsheet, available through ASCL, to show the additional costs to the school through alternative arrangements being put in place to support students and also where savings were being made. This spreadsheet would be shared with governors once the situation had been resolved.

It was resolved –

- i) That the headteacher and business manager be thanked for the updates on health and safety matters and the financial implications due to the requirements, and restrictions, placed on the school due to the coronavirus.

- ii) That governors fully support the decisions taken by the headteacher with regard to the continued payment of staff.
- iii) That governors support the decision of the headteacher to keep under review a decision around the completion of the second phase of the roof replacement.

216. Year 9 Options:

The headteacher reminded governors that consideration had been given to Y9 options at the last meeting of the governing body and a number of decisions had been taken. A copy of the full range of option choices available to students had been previously made available in Office 365 and the headteacher went through the detail of it, with a particular focus on the number of students opting for French. Governors were informed that the number of students opting for French as a preferred choice did not meet Ebacc requirements and the possible implications of this for the school were outlined. Alternative arrangements, including allocating French to those students who had indicated the subject as 7th or 8th choice, were considered. However, in doing so governors also took into account current parental anxieties as a result of the school's current situation.

It was resolved –

- i) That governors approve that French would not be offered as a subject option for those students who had indicated it as 7th and 8th choice and that the headteacher have a discussion with those students who had indicated French as 5th or 6th choice before finalising the subject options.
- ii) That in reaching this difficult decision, taken in the best interests of the school and wider community, governors recognise the possible implications for the school as a result of not meeting Ebacc requirements for the number of students taking a foreign language.

217. Staffing - 2020/21 School Year:

A copy of the school's staffing establishment for 2020/21, including the number of lessons taught by members of staff, had been previously made available in Office 365 and the headteacher went through the detail of it. An update was given on recent appointments, including a decision through the chair's power to act, to offer Mrs Arrowsmith a one-year fixed contract (0.4 PE and 0.6 general teaching). Two appointments had recently been made to the Science department and the headteacher thanked those governors who had supported the interviews which had been conducted remotely.

The headteacher outlined the number of lessons being taught by staff across all subject areas and reported that English would be tight and therefore kept under review. In contrast, there was over-staffing in MfL, Music and PE and possible options around this would be discussed with members of staff as appropriate. The average class size for Y9 would be 27 students.

It was resolved –

- i) That the 2020/21 staffing establishment be received and noted.
- ii) That governors agree to keep under review the staffing levels for the English department.

- iii) That governors support the chair's action in offering a one-year fixed contract to Mrs Arrowsmith.

218. Year 11 – 6th Form Applications:

A copy of the Y11 data tracker had been previously made available in Office 365 and the headteacher went through the detail of it. The headteacher reported on how the data would be used to help offer places to students requesting to attend the 6th form given that the school was now closed (other than for vulnerable students and pupils of skilled workers) and GCSE exams cancelled. An alternative solution had to be found for offering places and would include consideration being given to staff assessment, mock exam outcomes, Y11 March data. This information would help identify those students given a straight offer and those that will be offered an alternative option to what was requested. A small number of students would need a conversation with staff before being offered a place. Letters to inform parents of these arrangements were currently being prepared by Mrs Dodd, head of 6th form, and would be circulated after the Easter break.

It was resolved –

That governors support the arrangements for offering 6th form places to Y11 students and, in doing so, recognise the potential implications for future post-16 outcomes.

219. Other Business:

Record of Thanks

Governors placed on record their thanks and appreciation to the headteacher and all other members of staff for everything that they were doing to support students during such a difficult time. Governors were pleased to also note that this appreciation was shared by parents and the wider community as evidenced through correspondence being received and other methods of feedback.

220. Date of Next Meeting:

It was resolved –

That the next remote meeting (via Zoom) of the governing body be held on Thursday, 30 April 2020 at 4.15pm.

Signed.....
M Prescott

15 June 2020
Date.....