

Thomas Alleyne's High School, Uttoxeter

Minutes of a meeting of the Learning and Standards committee held remotely (via Zoom) on Tuesday, 15 September 2020 at 5.00pm.

Present:

Mr M Prescott (in the chair), Mr A Barton, Mr M Cruddas, Mrs B Davies, Mr T Hollins, Mr M Osborne-Town, Mrs L Perry.

Mrs J Rudge (Headteacher)

Also in Attendance:

Mrs A Maingay (Deputy Headteacher)
Mrs R Lindsay (Assistant Headteacher)
Mrs H Major (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)

Apologies:

An apology for absence was received from Mr S Clarke and an apology for late arrival was received from Mr M Cruddas. (Mr Prescott, chair of governors, agreed to take the chair for the meeting).

Welcome:

The chair was pleased to welcome Mrs H Major, assistant headteacher, to her first meeting of the Learning and Standards committee.

170. Election of Committee Chair:

It was resolved –

That Mr M Cruddas be elected as committee chair until the first meeting of the Learning and Standards committee in the autumn term 2021.

171. Election of Committee Vice-Chair:

It was resolved –

That Mr M Osborne-Town be elected as committee vice-chair until the first meeting of the autumn term 2021.

172. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest relevant to agenda items.

173. Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting of the Learning and Standards committee held on 12 May 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.

174. Matters Arising:

a) Award of Grades (Minute 161 refers)

Detailed discussion around this item was held later in the meeting but governors noted, with thanks to Mrs Peers and her team, the work undertaken to ensure that students received their appropriate grade.

b) Staff Vacancies (Minute 162 refers)

The headteacher reported that a detailed staffing update would be given in her report for the full governing body meeting to be held the following week. She was pleased to confirm, however, that the school was fully staffed.

c) Performance Management (Minute 164 refers)

The headteacher reported that teaching staff performance management was now underway but that more work was required to determine the process for support staff.

175. Centre Awarded Grades:

The headteacher confirmed that centre awarded GCSE grades had been given to students but reported that the process had been challenging for the school given the changing DfE advice. However, grades had been awarded in line with DfE policy and a thorough process had been followed. An outline was given of the headlines around the awarded grades and governors were informed that there had only been a marginal uplift of grades by the DfE. School progress scores had been high. The headteacher further reported that a detailed report would be made available in her report to the full governing body meeting.

It was resolved –

That governors note the process followed in awarding centre assessed grades and the outcomes for students.

176. Current Student Performance:

Mrs Peers outlined agreed actions to monitor current student performance and informed governors that a decision had been taken not to test Y11 students immediately on their return to school. This decision had been taken to give staff time during the autumn term to assess where students currently were in each subject and a data collection would begin towards the end of the first half term. Students would be assessed and a reporting process in place from November to identify where students should be in Spring 2021. A report was made available of a curriculum leaders' meeting to look at the accuracy of data, assessment schedule and validity moderation plans. Mrs Peers reported that the meeting had identified some areas of concern and that agreed actions had been put in place to address these. Subject departments were focussing in particular on:

- consistency and rigour of assessment across all departments
- accuracy of assessment
- accuracy of data

Fortnightly assessments had been agreed and would enable staff to gather the required evidence to ensure that students were given appropriate support. The assessment dates had dates had been put into the school calendar and details of these would also be circulated to governors.

It was resolved –

That the update on current student performance and the agreed assessment process be noted and that governors be kept updated on the impact of that process in bringing about any required improvement in student performance.

177. Update on Ross House and Return to Learning:

A report was made available to give an update on Ross House and its role in supporting a return to learning for some students. Mrs Major went through the detail of the report:

a) Ross House

Mrs Major confirmed that Ross House was now fully functional in helping to support small groups of students in their recovery to learning and an outline given of the intervention strategies in place to support students.

The headteacher further reported that a small number of students were exhibiting defiant behaviour since their return to school and, to ensure the safety and well-being of other students and members of staff, fixed-term exclusions had been given to those students. They would be given appropriate support when returning to school.

b) Recovery Curriculum

The headteacher reported that a recovery curriculum had been put in place to help students settle back into a school routine as quickly as possible. A programme of recovery sessions had been put in place and would focus in particular on:

- relationships – with other students and friends
- working with the ‘community’ – understanding of how the community has dealt with change
- curriculum – amending to support students in their lost learning
- metacognition – supporting students with changes to ways of working

Full discussion followed and governors referred to the remote learning programmes that had been put in place whilst the school had been closed to students. Governors asked if these programmes could be developed further to support any excluded student or those who may be isolating. The headteacher confirmed that remote learning programmes would continue to be delivered where possible.

It was resolved –

- i) That the update on Ross House and the programme in place to support the curriculum recovery be noted.
- ii) That governors encourage the continued development of remote learning programmes and that this should remain a priority for the school.

178. Environmental Committee:

A report was made available to show the work being undertaken by the Environmental committee and Mrs Young took governors through the detail of it, highlighting the work of Y10 - Y13 students to achieve positive environmental change in school and the local community. Governors noted that all projects were student led, with support for the funding of projects being sought from local businesses and other agencies. There was also an aim for environmental issues to be included within the school curriculum.

Full discussion followed and governors asked if links were being made with global organisations seeking climate change and if consideration was being given to succession planning for committee membership as students left the school.

It was resolved –

- i) That the report on the work of the Environmental committee be noted with thanks to all students concerned.
- ii) That governors encourage contact to be made with the middle schools to seek their support with environmental issues and to encourage those pupils to become committee members when joining Thomas Alleyne's High School.

179. Policy Review:

A number of updated policies had been made available for governors to discuss and subsequently approve. These included:

a) Safeguarding Policy

Mrs Maingay reported that the policy had been updated to reflect Staffordshire County Council's Safeguarding policy and guidance and the policy would include hyper-links to other related safeguarding policies – children missing education; taking images of children; behaviour and coronavirus addendum; mental health; SRE.

Discussion followed and governors referred to the school's Behaviour policy and questioned if it had been updated to reflect Covid-19 guidance. Concern was raised that not all students were adhering to social distancing, particularly those students going into town at lunchtime. Governors recommended that the policy should be updated to make clear the need for students to be aware of, and follow, social distancing requirements. The headteacher reported that the importance of all students following Covid-19 guidance remained a key issue for the school and that work continued to reflect this. In response to governors' questions, the headteacher also confirmed that all Y13 students had photo ID for their school lanyard and that arrangements were in hand for all Y12 students to have photo ID.

It was resolved –

- i) That the Safeguarding and other related policies be received and approved.
- ii) That the Behaviour policy be reviewed and updated to make clear Covid-19 guidance to be understood by students.

b) Assessment Policy

A copy of the Assessment policy was made available and Mrs Peers reported that whilst the policy remained under review it was still fit for purpose and no changes had been made to the policy.

Mr Osborne-Town reported that he had a number of views on how the policy could be further improved and it was agreed that he should discuss these with Mrs Peers.

It was resolved –

That the assessment policy be received and approved.

c) Pupil Premium Strategy Statement

A copy of the pupil premium strategy statement was made available and Mrs Maingay took governors through the detail of it. Mrs Maingay confirmed that the statement was being prepared with the support of Mr Godwin, assistant headteacher, and continued to be developed to show how pupil premium funding was being used to support those students. Governors noted that 1:1 tuition would remain a key intervention strategy as this had the biggest impact on student outcomes. Consideration was also being given to identifying funding to support student mental health issues. Once completed, the statement would be included on the school's website.

It was resolved –

That the pupil premium strategy statement be received and noted.

180. CPLD Programme and Teaching School Update:

a) CPLD Programme

A copy of the CPLD programme had been made available and Mrs Lindsay took governors through the detail of it. Governors noted the variety of inset and twilight training sessions that were compulsory for all staff and also the other optional themes which linked with the School Improvement Plan.

The headteacher further reported that, other than the school's own CPLD programme, staff were currently only being given approval to attend statutory training courses, but this would be reviewed after October half term.

b) Teaching School

A report was made available giving a teaching school update and Mrs Lindsay took governors through the detail of it, highlighting the progress being made against each of the KPIs. Governors were pleased to note the continuing success of the teaching school. Mrs Lindsay further outlined plans for the teaching school to become a regional hub for AQA Religious Studies network, which would be developed further over time to include other subjects.

It was resolved –

- i) That the CPLD programme be noted and that governors support the headteacher in currently only approving staff attendance at statutory training courses.
- ii) That the teaching school update be received and noted.

181. Any Other Business:

Senior Staff Team

The headteacher asked governors to note the hard work that had been undertaken by all members of the senior staff team to ensure stability across the school at such a difficult time. The headteacher was also extremely pleased to report that this work had helped to ensure that students have settled well following their return.

It was resolved –

That governors place on record their thanks to the senior staff team for all their hard work to ensure that all students quickly settled back into school when re-opening in September.

182. 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.

183. Consideration Given to KPIs:

The chair of the governing body reported that a review of governor KPIs for the previous school year had been completed and would be circulated to governors for discussion and to be reflected in the Governor Development Plan.

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 around:

- Student performance – governors requested to be kept informed of the impact of the assessment process in identifying gaps and improving student performance. This would enable further challenge as necessary. (Minute 176)
- Recovery curriculum – challenge to the school to ensure that remote learning programmes remained a key priority to support excluded students and those who may be self-isolating.
- Environmental issues – governor suggestion for the Environmental committee to link with middle schools to involve youngsters at an earlier age and to also support and encourage committee succession planning as students left Thomas Alleyne’s.
- Behaviour policy – request from governors for a review of the Behaviour policy to make clear wording to ensure that students fully understood their responsibilities around the importance of social distancing and other Covid-19 related matters.

184. Date of Next Meeting:

The next (remote - via Zoom) meeting of the Learning and Standards committee was to be held on Tuesday, 3 November 2020 at 5.00pm.

Signed.....
M Cruddas

3 November 2020
Date.....