

## Thomas Alleyne's High School, Uttoxeter

Minutes of a meeting of the Learning and Standards committee held remotely (via Zoom) on Tuesday, 19 January 2021 at 5.00pm.

### **Present:**

Mr M Cruddas (chair), Mr A Barton, Mrs B Davies, Mr C Forsyth, Mr T Fuller, Mrs E Lund, 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 H Major (Assistant Headteacher)  
Mrs E Peers (Assistant Headteacher)  
Mrs C Dodd (Senior Assistant Headteacher)  
Mr R Sheldon (Clerk to the Governing Body)

### **198: Welcome:**

The chair welcomed Mr Forsyth, Mr Fuller and Mrs Lund to their first meeting of the Learning and Standards committee.

### **199. Declarations of Interest:**

There were no declarations of interest relevant to agenda items.

### **200. Minutes:**

The minutes of the meeting of the Learning and Standards committee held on 3 November 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.

### **201. Matter Arising:**

#### Environmental Committee (Minute 178(b) refers)

Mr Osborne-Town reported that he was now liaising with the Town Council's Biodiversity committee and gave an update on the work it was doing to encourage the local community to support a range of environmental projects. Good progress continues to be made by the Environmental committee and further initiatives will be developed once students return to school. Governors will be kept informed of developments.

### **202. MFL Action Plan review:**

Mr Noon, head of Modern Foreign Languages department, was present for this item and took governors through the detail of the MFL progress action plan, a copy of which had been previously made available in Office 365.

In going through the action plan, Mr Noon referred in particular to current data and progress of the various actions plans to bring about improvement. He also outlined the actions in place to improve recruitment in the number of students taking up French and the future opportunities being made available. Mr Noon was pleased to report that the data was showing an improvement in the MFL department over the last 18 months.

Full discussion followed and governors questioned, and challenged, the impact of the various improvement strategies. An explanation was requested of the work being undertaken with the middle schools to help close the gap for Y9 students and Mr Noon outlined the work being undertaken with schools and also confirmed that regular pyramid meetings continued to be held.

Governors also questioned the success criteria being used to evidence the progress being made and the headteacher reported that a key focus was for the school to move towards meeting the national Ebacc requirements. This would, however, be a staged process rather than an immediate move to required levels. As such, the MFL department was moving towards a 30% uptake of students taking French this year with costings being sought for a both a 50% or 70% uptake from the following year. With this in mind, governors were assured that the leadership team would continue to support the MFL department in developing ideas to improve student uptake figures in French.

It was resolved –

That Mr Noon be thanked for attending the meeting and that governors congratulate him for the work being undertaken by the MFL department to improve take up figures in the number of students taking up French and outcomes.

#### **203. Maths Strategies:**

Mrs Ibbs, head of Maths department, was present for this item to report on the work of the Maths department. Mrs Ibbs took governors through a presentation, previously made available in Office 365, to highlight the various strategies in place to support student progress. Governors were pleased to note that Maths had consistently been in the highest quintet for progress since 2017. The headteacher further reported that Maths was one of the school's higher performing subjects in terms of student progress. Mrs Ibbs reported that current Y11 data was not as strong as previous and outlined the agreed strategies to support student progress at GCSE in lessons and through a recovery curriculum.

Full discussion followed, with a particular focus on the on-line learning programme available to students and Mrs Ibbs outlined the positives, and disadvantages, of on-line learning for Maths and in keeping them motivated. Mrs Ibbs also referred to the level 2 certificate in further Maths which was being offered as an after-school subject to stretch the most able student and was pleased to report that there had been a positive take up for this.

It was resolved –

That Mrs Ibbs be thanked for attending the meeting and congratulated her and the Maths department in maintaining high standards year after year.

#### **204. Ebacc uptake:**

Discussion had taken place at the last meeting of the full governing body regarding the national Ebacc requirement for the numbers of student take-up. A report to show Ebacc

requirements, and the school's progressed targets, had been previously made available in Office 365 and Mr Mitchell, deputy headteacher, took governors through the detail of it. He reminded governors that the national Ebacc targets were 75% of all students by 2022 and 90% of all students by 2025.

Mr Mitchell informed governors that he was developing a number of proposals to increase the take-up in the number of students studying French and moving towards the national targets. The different proposals were:

- Proposal 1 – to increase entry to 50% by September 2022 whilst retaining 4 option blocks for the majority of the cohort.
- Proposal 2- to increase entry to 70% by September 2022 whilst retaining 4 option blocks for the majority of the cohort.
- Proposal 3 – to increase entry to 100% by September 2022 but reducing to 3 option pools.
- Proposal 4 – to consider introducing a second language to the department.

Mr Mitchell gave details of the possible impact of each of the different options through making French compulsory, particularly with regard to limiting other subject options, parental perception and the school's staffing establishment.

The headteacher further reported that the various Ebacc proposals continued to be developed and that governor approval was not being sought at this moment in time. An incremental approach would, however, be taken to increase student take-up in studying French rather than an immediate move to meet national targets. Formal governor approval would be sought at a future meeting.

Full discussion followed and governors recognised the implications of making French compulsory particularly with regard to the limits it would impose on other subject options available to students. Governors also recognised the importance of working closely with the middle schools to ensure that students were fully prepared and the headteacher confirmed that schools would work closely with each other to discuss and prepare pathways for the study of French.

It was resolved –

That Mr Mitchell be thanked for his report on Ebacc uptake and that governors look forward to receiving further information around the various proposals to enable them to make an informed decision on how the school should continue to work towards meeting the national Ebacc targets.

## **205. School Response to Closure During Lockdown 3:**

### **a) Testing Centre and LA Quality Assurance Visit**

The headteacher reported that a full risk assessment had taken place before the school became a testing centre. A quality assurance visit undertaken by the local authority had confirmed that all necessary measures had been put in place. The chair of governors also reported that he had visited the test centre before it opened and had been impressed with the work that had been undertaken. Governors were informed that there had been over 250 tests but that that none had proved positive. The headteacher also assured governors that the risk assessment was continually reviewed to ensure that it continued to reflect the everchanging local and national advice being given to schools.

It was resolved –

That the headteacher and staff colleagues be thanked for all their work to ensure that a testing centre within school was able to open.

b) Covid Cases and Tracking – Including a Staffing Update

The headteacher reported that, although there had been 5 positive cases during the Christmas period, there had been no recent positive cases and no impact on the organisation of the school. The headteacher further reported that she was currently working from home but would be returning to school very shortly. All vulnerable staff, including staff partners where applicable, had been given approval to work from home and governors were assured that the staffing arrangements currently in place were not having a negative impact on the quality of educational provision.

It was resolved –

That governors fully support the staffing arrangements currently in place.

c) Teaching and Learning Online – Response and Monitoring

A number of reports regarding online learning had been previously made available in Office 365 and Mrs Maingay, deputy headteacher, and Mrs Lindsay, assistant headteacher, went through the detail of them. The reports included information and advice given to parents regarding school arrangements for online learning and monitoring undertaken to help staff identify support students as may be necessary. Governors noted that 95% of all lessons were now given online.

Mrs Lindsay took governors through the detail of the monitoring audit that was being used to support departments in the delivery of online lessons. CPD was available for all staff and support given, where necessary, for those members of staff not as confident with on-line learning. Students continued to be mentored and mock exams were also being arranged remotely for Y11 and Y13 students.

Discussion followed with particular regard to the arrangements in place to ensure that all students were given appropriate support for online learning and the headteacher assured governors that the level of monitoring and support given to Y11 and Y13 students was proportionate to the monitoring and support of all other year groups.

It was resolved –

That the online teaching update be noted with thanks to Mrs Maingay and Mrs Lindsay for the work they were doing.

d) Mentoring

A report had been previously made available in Office 365 to show how students were being mentored and Mrs Maingay went through the detail of it. Governors were informed that there was regular staff contact with all students and, where there were concerns, contact was made with the parents. The school's welfare officer also gave support where necessary. Attendance was regularly monitored and governors noted that the attendance figures were in line with Government targets.

The headteacher also reported that all students had been contacted by a member of staff every two weeks, but this was now to be changed to every three weeks in recognition of staff workloads.

It was resolved –

That governors note the school's arrangements for mentoring students and support the change to student contact every three weeks, but with a focus on increased support for those students identified as being of concern.

e) Key Worker School

Mrs Major, assistant headteacher, outlined the current arrangements for children of key workers attending the school, also including vulnerable children. Attendance figures were higher than the first lockdown and other parents also continued to request a place. All requests were considered. All vulnerable Thomas Alleyne's students had been asked to attend school and, although some chose to remain at home, there was a positive number of students in attendance. Staff continued to monitor their progress and students would be asked to attend school, rather than stay at home, if this was considered appropriate. Mrs Maingay was also pleased to report that there was currently a higher attendance of EHCP students than during the first lockdown.

It was resolved –

That the report on Thomas Alleyne's as a key worker school be noted, with thanks to Mrs Major.

**206. Exams Update:**

Mrs Peers, assistant headteacher, informed governors that remote mock exams and assessments were being planned for Y11 and Y13 students. However, all summer exams 2021 had been cancelled and reference was made to a consultation document recently published by OFQUAL seeking views around alternative arrangements that could be put in place. The school would respond to the consultation document as appropriate. Mrs Peers further reported that a number of lessons had been learnt from last year's exams and that a number of changes had been made to address these, to ensure that students were better supported.

The headteacher further reported that the support given by governors to help determine arrangements for awarding student grades last year had been of value and requested that similar support be given this year.

It was resolved –

- i) That Mrs Peers be thanked for her report to update governors on arrangements being made for this year's exams.
- ii) That a small group of governors would work with the headteacher and leadership team to help determine exam arrangements and outcomes, taking into account any national guidance received.

**207. National Tutoring Programme – Update:**

Governors agreed to defer this item and to include it on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

## **208. Policy Review:**

### a) Homework Policy

The headteacher reported that this policy was being further developed and therefore not yet available for approval. It would be presented at a future meeting.

### b) Safeguarding Policy – Coronavirus Addendum

The addendum to the Safeguarding policy had been previously made available in Office 365 and Mrs Maingay reported that its content was in line with local authority guidance. The headteacher further reported that there was a specific issue around the recording of on-line lessons and possible breaches of GDPR as a result. The local authority was therefore now advising that reference to live recording of lessons be removed from the policy. However, this advice was being questioned should the recording of lessons be done with the knowledge and consent of parents.

Full discussion followed and the benefits of recording on-line lessons were outlined. Mr Forsyth stated that his understanding was that the recording of lessons, if done for safeguarding purposes, was permissible and would not contravene GDPR. Although if lessons were to be recorded then parents must give consent to their child being included. Governors asked what other schools were doing to resolve this matter and also recognised that the views of parents were important regarding this matter. The headteacher suggested that she could include something in the next newsletter to parents to seek their thoughts.

It was resolved –

- i) That governors agree that the current arrangements for recording lessons should continue for a further two weeks and that during this time the headteacher be requested to seek the views of parents.
- ii) That this item be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the full governing body for further discussion and subsequent approval of the addendum to the Safeguarding policy.

## **209. 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.

## **210. Any Other Business:**

### Health and Safety

The headteacher reported that there had been a recent flood in the coronavirus waste disposal unit and that the incident had been dealt with in accordance with protocols for contaminated waste.

It was resolved –

That the headteacher be thanked for bring this matter to the attention of governors and fully support the actions taken to resolve it.

**211. Consideration Given to KPIs:**

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

Evidenced through:

- An invitation to the meeting for the heads of MFL and Maths department to enable governors to question, and challenge, strategies put in place to bring about improvement where necessary. (Minutes 202 and 203)
- Ebacc discussions – governors requested the headteacher to develop the various options to enable governors to agree how to meet national targets. (minute 204)
- Covid-19 – discussions throughout the meeting to enable governors to question, and challenge, actions taken to ensure that all students were able to access remote learning lessons, with support available where appropriate.

KPI 10 – Governors are taking appropriate action to ensure their responsibilities towards staff well-being are being met.

Evidenced through to discussions around covid-19 and actions taken by the headteacher to ensure the safety and well-being of staff and students. Governors also gave their support for all vulnerable staff, and their partners, not to be required to attend school. (Minute 205).

**212. Date of Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Learning and Standards committee was to be held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 5.00pm.

M. Osborne-Town

Signed.....

18 May 2021

Date.....