

Thomas Alleyne's High School, Uttoxeter

Minutes of a meeting of the Learning and Standards committee held in the school on Tuesday, 14 May 2019 at 5.00pm.

Present:

Dr M Jary (chair), Mr M Cruddas, Mrs B Davies, Mr I Johnstone, Mr M Osborne-Town, Mrs L Perry, Mr M Prescott.

Mrs J Rudge (Headteacher)

Also in Attendance:

Mrs A Maingay (Deputy Headteacher)
Mrs C Catterall (Assistant Headteacher)
Mrs C Dodd (Assistant Headteacher)
Mrs K Goodwin (Assistant Headteacher)
Mrs R Lindsay (Assistant Headteacher)
Mrs E Young (Deputy Head of VI Form)

Mrs K Cochrane (Headteacher – John Taylor High School)

Mr R Sheldon (Clerk to the Governing Body)

Apology:

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Mrs K Fisher.

Welcomes:

The chair was pleased to welcome Mrs Perry to her first meeting following her recent appointment as parent governor.

The chair was also pleased to welcome Mrs Cochrane to the meeting who was to present her post-16 review, undertaken as part of her national professional qualification for headteachers (NPQH).

103. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest relevant to agenda items.

104. Post-16 Review:

Mrs Cochrane reported that NPQH candidates were required to attend a placement school to design an action plan to meet its resourcing and capability needs. She had accepted an invitation from the headteacher to use Thomas Alleyne's as the placement school and had undertaken a review of post-16 provision. This presentation was to take governors through the action plan resulting from that review. Mrs Cochrane took governors through the action plan which focussed on the following two priorities, with agreed success criteria for both:

- Improvement in KS5 Performance – success criteria to increase the L3VA academic performance to 0.
- Increase in recruitment and retention into the sixth form – success criteria to retain 55% of TAHS Y11 into Y12 and recruit an increased number of external students.

Discussion followed and governors questioned if there was more that could be done by the school to bring about the necessary improvement as outlined in the action plan. The plan had included the importance of schools sharing good practice and governors questioned why this wasn't happening as it was something that had been previously agreed by them. Governors also recognised the importance of sowing the seeds around what the school's sixth form could offer students as soon as possible once starting school in Y9.

The headteacher reported that departments were not resistant to adopting other practices and that the impact of the sharing of good practice was starting to be seen. An example of this was most departments now using books to better track and monitor student progress. The headteacher also reported that she would continue to look at strategies to ensure that all students were made aware of the benefits offered by the sixth form throughout their time in school.

Before finishing her presentation, Mrs Cochrane wished to place on record her thanks to the headteacher and members of staff for the help and support given to her whilst undertaking the review of post-16 provision.

It was resolved –

That governors thank Mrs Cochrane for agreeing to undertake a review of post-16 provision at Thomas Alleyne's High School and for attending the meeting to give a presentation on her review and subsequent action plan.

105. Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting of the Learning and Standards committee held on 15 January 2019 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.

106. Staffing Update:

The headteacher circulated a copy of a report to show the recent staffing appointments that had been made and those appointments that were still outstanding. The report had also previously been made available in Office 365. The headteacher thanked those governors who had supported the various interviews and confirmed that everyone had been pleased with the quality of each appointment.

Full discussion followed and governors questioned the possible implications of the number of appointments having to be made, particularly the number of new heads of department. One governor also referred to concerns being expressed by some parents regarding the number of staff leaving the school. The headteacher reported that no concerns had been brought to her attention and stated that most of the staff had left the school for promotion elsewhere or through re-location. She was also confident that the number of appointments would be of benefit to the school rather than an issue, but that the induction for all newly appointed staff would be key to their success and arrangements for this were already in hand. This included staff induction arrangements being considered by the whole of the senior leadership team.

Governors further discussed the concerns that were being expressed by some parents and agreed that it was important for all parents to be kept updated on any new staff appointments made and the headteacher confirmed that this was usually done through the school newsletter published at the start of the new school year.

It was resolved –

- i) That the headteacher be thanked for the staffing appointment update and that it be received and noted.
- ii) That the headteacher be requested to inform parents, in the school newsletter to be published before the end of term, of the high quality staffing appointments that had recently been made.

107. Current Data:

The headteacher presented a report on current school data, with a particular focus on the April data capture for Y10 students. Outcomes for each subject department were highlighted and ranked in order to show a comparison of those performing well against those not doing so well. An outline was given of the strategies that had been put in place to bring about required improvement in those departments not performing well. The data report also highlighted the performance of individual students across subject areas and the headteacher reported that a clearer indication on progress would be available after the Y10 exams. An updated report would therefore be given at the next meeting to be held at the start of the new school year.

Finally the headteacher outlined the headline figures for Y10 GCSE options and confirmed that, as previously reported, the number of Ebacc students remained the key concern and challenge for the school. Discussion followed and governors asked what more could be done by the school to encourage students to study French, including a possible change to current school policy around the study of foreign languages. The headteacher reported that the number of students studying French reflected the national picture but was to discuss future options with the recently appointed head of MfL to identify what more could be done by the school in this area.

It was resolved –

- i) That the headteacher be thanked for her report on the current data capture for Y10 students and that governors await an updated report at the next meeting.
- ii) That governors also request an updated report following the headteacher's discussions with the head of MfL to show identified strategies to encourage more students to study French.

108. Modern Foreign Languages (MfL) – Outcomes and Action Planning:

Mrs Lindsay reported that the review of the MfL department, undertaken by Mrs O'Hagan, specialist education lead (SLE), had been completed and a summary of the outcomes and action planning following the review was circulated. A copy had also previously been made available in Office 365. Mrs Lindsay further reported that many of the agreed actions had already been put in place and were starting to be embedded. The newly appointed head of MfL would ensure that all other agreed actions were put in place and that this would include looking at all of the current schemes of work, with changes made as necessary.

It was resolved –

That the summary of the outcomes and agreed actions following the review of MfL be received and noted and that governors request to be kept updated on the impact of the new identified strategies to bring about improvement in MfL.

109. Pastoral Update:

A report providing a pastoral update had been previously made available in Office 365 and a copy was also circulated at the meeting. Mrs Catterall went through the detail of it, including in particular:

- Attendance – as requested by governors, details were given of ghost data including the reasons for absence. Mrs Catterall reported that the school wasn't able to challenge the reasons for absence but confirmed that the school continued to work with all of the students concerned. Mrs Catterall was also pleased to report on the reduction in the number of persistent absences, particularly for pupil premium students, which reflected the positive actions taken by the school.
- Behaviour/Exclusions – the number of exclusions from school were in line with local and national patterns. The headteacher referred to recent media reports relating to the practice of some schools, locally and nationally, to 'off-roll' students rather than permanently excluding them. The headteacher assured governors that such practice wasn't followed at this school but referred to recent decisions taken to place two Y11 students in alternative educational provision rather than permanently excluding them. Both decisions had been made following discussions with parents and the Local Authority and were in the best interests of the two students concerned.
- Return to Learning – governors were informed of the changing role of Dove House in supporting a return to learning for students. Key changes had included a reduction in the number of full day isolations and replaced by shorter periods of isolation. Governors were also informed that following Mr Wright's appointment as isolation supervisor the strategies to support students in a return to learning had resulted in a significant reduction in the number of exclusions from school.
- Safeguarding team – the strength of the school's safeguarding team was highlighted and the reporting of safeguarding data to both the Uttoxeter Learning Trust and the Local Authority was now done through the Section 175 audit.

It was resolved –

- i) Mrs Catterall be thanked for presenting her pastoral report and that it be received and noted.
- ii) That governors fully support the actions of the headteacher to place two Y11 students in alternative educational provision.
- iii) That governors are pleased to note the impact of the isolation supervisor in supporting students in a return to learning and significantly reducing the number of exclusions.
- iv) That details of the school's safeguarding team be noted.

110. Teaching School Update:

Mrs Goodwin circulated a report providing an update on the work of the teaching school, a copy of which had also been previously made available in Office 365. An update was given as follows on the three KPI's for the teaching school:

- School-led initial teacher training (Mrs Goodwin)
- Continuing professional development and leadership development (Mrs Lindsay)
- School to school support (Mrs Maingay)

It was resolved –

That the teaching school update be received and noted with thanks to all concerned.

111. Policy Review:

A number of policies were to be reviewed by governors and all had been previously made available in Office 365.

a) Performance Management Policy

Mrs Maingay reminded governors that this policy had been discussed at the previous meeting and had been revised to take account of those discussions.

It was resolved –

That the Performance Management policy be received and approved as presented.

b) Assessment Policy

Mrs Maingay outlined the changes that had been made to the policy and the headteacher further reported that it had been updated to include measures to be taken, in line with DfE guidance, to improve teacher well-being and reduce the teacher workload.

It was resolved –

- i) That the assessment policy be received and approved as presented.
- ii) That 'teachers' workload' be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the full governing body to enable further discussion.

c) Admissions Policy

Mrs Maingay reported that no changes had been made to the current policy although a change of the review date to October was recommended.

It was resolved –

That the Admissions policy be received and approved as presented and that the future review date of the policy be changed to October.

d) Exclusion Policy

Mrs Catterall reported that there had been no changes made to the policy and that it remained in line with DfE guidance.

It was resolved –

That the Exclusion policy be received and approved as presented.

e) Prevent Policy

Mrs Catterall reported that there had been no changes to the policy and that it remained in line with national guidance.

It was resolved –

That the Prevent policy be received and approved as presented.

f) Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Mrs Catterall reported that the policy was based on local and national guidance and was to be submitted to the ULT for formal approval on behalf of all ULT schools.

It was resolved –

That the Attendance and Punctuality policy be received and noted.

g) Behaviour for Learning Policy

Mrs Catterall reminded governors that the behaviour action plan and policy had been discussed in detail at the previous meeting and that the Behaviour for Learning policy had been changed significantly to reflect those discussions. Governors were pleased to note in particular that the revised policy would help bring about greater consistency in rewards and sanctions for students and also that students with low level disruptive behaviour could be identified at an earlier stage.

It was resolved –

That the Behaviour for Learning policy be received and approved as presented.

h) Data Protection Policy

The headteacher reported that the policy reflected GDPR guidance and outcomes following the recent GDPR audit within school.

It was resolved –

That the Data Protection policy be received and approved as presented.

112. 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.

113. 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

Covered through discussions relating to the post-16 review and the resolution of governors to monitor recruitment and retention of students to the 6th form (minute 104).

Covered through discussions around the Y10 data review and the action plan for improving the MfL department. The headteacher was requested to show the impact of strategies to bring about improvement (minutes 107 and 108).

Covered through discussions around the role of Dove House in supporting students in a return to learning and the positive impact following the appointment of an isolation supervisor (minute 109).

KPI 5 – Governors use Performance Management systems, including the performance management of the headteacher to improve teaching, leadership and management

Covered through a review and subsequent approval of the updated Performance Management policy (minute 110).

KPI8 – Governors engage with stakeholders, including staff and parents.

A request by governors for the headteacher to write to parents to inform them of the recent appointments of high quality staff (minute 106).

114. Date of Next Meeting:

Governors were reminded that the next meeting of the Learning and Standards committee would be held in the school early at the start of the new school year in September although the date had still to be finalised.

M. Jary
Signed.....

17 September 2019
Date.....