



## SPRING TERM 2020

**MINUTES** of the Learning and Curriculum Committee meeting of the Governors of Holmer Green Senior School held at the School on Tuesday 10 March 2020 at 18.00

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Mr S. Barrett (SB)	Mrs E. Starling (ES) (Chair)
	Mrs H. Jones (HJ)	Mrs L. Swain (LS)
	Ms M. Selby-Boothroyd (MSB)	
<b>IN ATTENDANCE</b>	Mrs R. Golding (RG)	Assistant Headteacher/ Head of Sixth Form
	Miss K. Joynson (KJ)	Assistant Headteacher/Curriculum and Assessment
	Mr P. Tang (PT)	Deputy Headteacher
	Mrs A. Thomas (AT)	Governor, Non-Committee Member
	Ms E. Walker (EW)	Clerk
<b>ABSENT</b>	Miss J. Kirkpatrick (JK)	Apologies received and accepted

NB. Governors' questions are highlighted in *italics* throughout these minutes.

<p><b>Quality of Education</b></p> <p><b>1.1</b> All students make outstanding progress – no gaps between groups of learners, in particular disadvantaged and boys.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> To develop a highly effective curriculum that address specific lines of enquiry/gaps in each subject area, such as, effective questioning and dealing with misconceptions and develops the cultural capital of all.</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Students are given demanding work and feel challenged in class, in particular HPA</p>
<p><b>Personal Development</b></p> <p><b>3.1</b> Coherently planned Enrichment programme that is well attended, particularly by those who are disadvantaged, &amp; that supports the development of character</p> <p><b>3.2</b> HGSS promotes equality and diversity so that students respect differences</p>
<p><b>Sixth Form</b></p> <p><b>5.1</b> Increase the number of Oxbridge, Russell Group and Higher Apprenticeship applications</p> <p><b>5.2</b> Reduce the residual/variation in outcomes between subjects</p> <p><b>5.3</b> Ensure that Disadvantaged (ex PP and Bursary) students make progress at least in line with their Non-Disadvantaged peers</p> <p><b>5.4</b> Curriculum coherently planned and sequenced for future learning and employment (year 7-13)</p>

<b>1</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> Mrs Starling welcomed everyone to the meeting.	<b>ACTION</b>
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**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no interests declared specifically in items on the agenda although governors noted the standing declaration that Mrs Starling is a governor at Highworth School.

**3 NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items were raised to be discussed as AOB:

**4 YEARS 12 AND 13 UPDATE**

RG updated governors as follows:

**Strengths**

- Students working on / above target is 6% up on this time last year;
- A\* to C grades are at 92% up 6% on the same time last year;
- 82% of Disadvantaged A Level entries are above target (above whole year average by 24%);
- 67% of Disadvantaged BTEC entries are above target (significantly above non-disadvantaged);
- Dist\*-Dist up 30% on last year (69% of all BTEC students currently);
- Dist\* - Merit up 6% on same time last year (100%).

**Areas for Improvement**

- 68% of females studying A Levels are performing above target whereas only 61% of males are. The gap: 7% (however the situation is reversed for BTEC entries where 43% of males are performing on/above target and only 39% of females are);
- 60% of SWR A Level students (3 entries) are performing below their target (42% of HGSS students are).

**Departments predicting lower than Alps 3:****Business: ALPs 5 (12 entries)**

Action: Underperforming students have been put onto report and working in additional supervised study until work ethic /performance improves in line with targets. Seneca is used widely to increase engagement with revision. Some students are working in Business in private study to target weaker areas.

**English Literature: ALPs 5 (5 entries)**

Action: Underperforming students have been put onto report and working in additional supervised study until work ethic /performance improves in line with targets.

**Geography: ALPs 5** (5 entries)

Action: Underperforming students have been put onto report and working in additional supervised study, Year 13 students are attending additional lessons, Coursework support clinics are being held.

**History: ALPs 8** (7 entries)

Action: Mock performances scrutinised. Areas of weakness acknowledged and targeted for future practice.

**Mathematics ALPs 4** (23 entries)

Action: students have benefitted from 2 additional full days of teaching over Half Term, weaknesses of students have been identified and additional topic specific lessons provided for different areas of weakness.

**Product Design ALPs 4** (6 entries)

Action: Additional support gained from Maths staff for teaching of new Maths element of course, additional practical days, feedback supplied within Examination board constraints.

**Politics: ALPs 7** (14 entries including 2 from SWR)

Action: Underperforming HGSS students have been put onto report and working in additional supervised study until work ethic /performance improves in line with targets. 3 underperforming students are from SWR (and therefore not HGSS's results). Head of Sixth Form from SWR / HGSS have observed lesson, (very strong) HOSF at SWR has also received concerns from teachers at SWR about the same students. Teacher and HOSF SWR are liaising to set/supervise additional tasks for said students at SWR.

**RS: ALPs 5** (10 entries)

Action: 4 underperforming students. Various issues. Teacher aware of individual weaknesses and working with students on individual basis to support.

**BTEC Sport: ALPS 6** (17 entries)

Action: All prior results have been analysed, and underperforming students have been entered for re-sits (awaiting results March 18<sup>th</sup>)

**BTEC Applied Science: ALPS 5** (14 entries)

Action: All prior results have been analysed, and underperforming students have been entered for re-sits (awaiting results March 18<sup>th</sup>). Underperforming students have been put onto report and

working in additional supervised study until work ethic / performance improves in line with targets.

**BTEC Performing Arts: ALPS 5 (2 entries)**

Action: All prior results have been analysed, and underperforming students have been entered for re-sits (awaiting results March 18<sup>th</sup>) Additional lessons; external moderation and support.

*You said at last meeting that it was early days for Year 12, what is the update on this? How are they doing? Is there anything else we should be putting into place to support them?*

RG explained the strategies that were being implemented which involved meeting with Heads of Faculties every half-term to identify any students for whom there are concerns. Appropriate interventions are then introduced early and monitored.

RG reminded governors that she will remove a student's right to roam if they are not putting in the necessary work. This sanction is usually very effective.

*Predicted outcomes in History appear to be low across both year groups. Is this due to students choosing the wrong course?*

RG reported that History is taught by a very strong teacher but agreed that this needed to be explored further.

**ACTION:** Feedback to next meeting about History in Years 12 and 13.

RG

**5 DESTINATIONS**

Governors noted the information in the report provided to them. RG provided the following updates:

- The UCAS deadline has now passed. Those students who have not applied to UCAS, or those who want to have a Plan B, are receiving 1:1 interviews with the Careers Adviser and being given personalised action plans.
- The data relating to 'students who are not in education or employment for at least two terms after study' is impacted by the popularity of students undertaking gap years.
- In the past apprenticeships were not promoted as is the case now. The Careers Adviser has made a great difference in raising awareness of apprenticeships. In careers week, two 2018 leavers came back to school to talk about their experiences as apprentices.
- The Alumni network has now been launched via LinkedIn but is not proving to be very popular to date. This is an area

for development including chasing the destinations of those students who are listed currently as 'unknown'.

- There has been a significant increase in the number of students applying to Russell Group universities this year. 1 student has received an offer to study English at Cambridge which is a fantastic achievement for this student. RG thanked Miss Harrison for the time and effort she has invested in supporting all students with their UCAS applications.
- It is recognized that Russell Group universities are not always the best destination for students applying to universities and that many non-Russell Group universities have better ratings for particular areas of study.
- The Scholars Programme and Brilliant Club have helped raise students' aspirations.
- During the interview process for application to the sixth form for 2020, all students are being asked the same questions by staff – about their aspirations in order to support them achieve their desired outcomes.
- The number of external applications to the sixth form has increased by over 50%, with students applying from a diverse range of settings across a wide area.

Governors congratulated RG for all her hard work in improving Sixth Form provision which has been acknowledged and promoted by Challenge Partners during their recent review.

## 6 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

### 6.1 Enrichment Programme (Minute Nos. 6 & 10)

RG shared the feedback from a recent survey monkey questionnaire to sixth formers about the enrichment programme. She highlighted the following:

- On the whole the feedback has been very positive although students in Year 13 regretted the loss of the independence that they previously had during the time now designated for enrichment.
- Sport-related activities have been particularly well-received as have the food related activities.
- The Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work has been a great opportunity and 12 students have already qualified.
- The school is working with Chiltern Rangers to secure a lottery grant of £10,000 to apply for conservation/ecological projects locally.

- It has involved staff and the Sixth Form Management team in a lot of hard work to ensure the variety and consistent quality of the activities on offer. It has been a good opportunity for Years 12 and 13 to mix.

RG was thanked for her input. She left the meeting at 18.40

### **6.2 Committee Involvement in SIP (Minute No. 4.2.2)**

The Chair reported that she had spoken to Mr Green who had stated that both he and Mr Hillyard saw the School Improvement Plan as a living document that any of the committees could feed into at any time.

The Committee noted that their role was to influence the creation of SIP as well as to monitor it.

It was agreed that each of the SIP objectives would be looked at in more detail at subsequent meetings.

**ACTION:** Agenda item for all meetings

**ES/PT  
Agenda item**

### **6.3 PASS Survey (Minute No. 6)**

KJ referred governors to the 2 summary documents which had been circulated to them. She highlighted the following:

- The survey covers years 7-11, the Sixth Form undertake a different survey which is also very useful.
- The results were very similar to last year except for preparedness for learning (which decreased significantly) and confidence in learning (which increased). Everything else remained the same.
- Resilience of Year 11 girls is an issue. Currently the school undertakes resilience training at the start of Year 11 and this is being repeated before and after Easter for a group of girls who are exhibiting exam stress.
- Attitudes to teachers were lowest in Years 8 and 10 and amongst girls in year 11. Heads of Years are looking into this, gathering evidence through student voice who will report back to SLT after Easter. A teacher is also investigating Year 8 attitudes as part of her NPQSL qualification.
- There is further work to undertake to investigate the reasons for, and address, the gaps identified in the PASS survey in respect of pupil gender, disadvantage and ethnicity.

A governor suggested that the disruption that this year group had last year in respect of English teaching in particular may have had an impact on pupil attitudes to school. It will be interesting to explore this further now that staffing is more stable.

LS reported that the PASS survey is also being looked at by the P&P committee in terms of welfare.

*Does the PASS survey feed into the SIP?*

It is an objective in the SIP to undertake the PASS survey and this is only the second year of doing this survey. The results of the survey will be useful in directing the School Improvement Priorities going forward. The school also looks at the student level data.

*Is it not anonymous? Does this affect the outcomes?*

KJ reported that knowing which comments have been made by which students helps staff to support those who are struggling, possibly in silence.

## 7

### **CENTURY TECH**

PTA referred governors to the reports that they had been sent. He explained that Century Tech has been used in Science for a range of students.

KJ explained that she had made use of the programme for Year 11 revision and it is particularly suited to those top set students who like the challenge and are motivated. The less-able students in Science have liked it less.

*Can we run both Century Tech and Seneca going forward to meet the needs of those students wanting more challenge and those who struggle?*

It was acknowledged that Seneca is good for knowledge building and knowledge retrieval but it does not challenge the High Prior Attainers enough.

*Is there a cost implication of having both programmes in use?*

PT explained that Seneca is free to use but there is a cost to the school of using Century Tech.

*Can the students log on at home with Seneca?*

Yes, it is especially beneficial if students use it a lot but it does not push them to get higher grades. Recent research has confirmed that the more able are better able to access these types of programmes and this needs to be kept in mind.

*Who are the staff members in school who supervise the children when they use Century Tech?*

It was confirmed that they are mostly Science teachers but also cover staff. It is not always a subject specialist so this may be a problem for those who are finding it difficult. However, it is not covering new knowledge – it is about knowledge retrieval.

The feedback from some students and staff at the recent Governors' Day had been that Century Tech was not fit for purpose. Staff had also commented that it was difficult to administer and the students don't get feedback.

KJ explained that there is a button for them to press which takes them through the learning if they cannot remember the knowledge. Some find it frustrating that you cannot move on until they have answered correctly. Students have had training on how to use the programme but this probably needs refreshing more frequently. The school needs to reconsider the way these programmes have been implemented.

PT explained that Century Tech was commissioned for a trial year and it's use will not be continued if it is not deemed to be benefitting the students.

*What's the current thinking about the use of these programmes for next year?*

There is a predicted shortfall in Science teaching in September although it is hoped that the current recruitment will be successful. The use of Century Tech and Seneca to support learning is being considered.

**ACTION:** It was agreed that an update would be provided for the next meeting.

KJ/PT

## 8 ASP/IDSR

### Analyse School Performance (ASP)

KJ circulated a revised ASP Summary sheet 2018/19. She highlighted the following:

- The attainment 8 data is skewed locally by the selective system in Buckinghamshire
- 1 school refuser means that 99% of students stay in education after Year 11 which is still well above the national average of 94%.

- Students with High Prior Attainment do well in Maths but disadvantaged students do less-well and this is a focus for the department.
- The subject level analysis ASP has just been received and confirms the information already reported to this committee.

*Why is Maths focusing on 5+ rather than 4+?*

It was explained that ASP assumes that Grade 5 is a pass for benchmarking purposes and this is the measure used at HGSS also.

**Secondary Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR)**

It was noted that

- this is a very positive report for HGSS as confirmed by Challenge Partners
- the current focus is on High Prior Attainers.

**9 FEEDBACK FROM CHALLENGE PARTNERS REVIEW**

The report highlights many strengths and some areas for development which are now the focus:

- Feedback – looking at what is working and can be shared across the school and what needs improving. Departments will have different approaches, and this is important, but they need to be able to explain their curriculum intent.
- Questioning strategies – recognising that those strategies that are good for HPA students are beneficial for all students. Mrs Douglas is leading on work in this area.
- Disadvantage students – the school is reflecting on next stages with respect to underperforming Pupil Premium students.

A governor commented that Challenge Partners did not comment much on SEND provision although it was recognised that a specific SEND Review had been commissioned for this purpose. It was felt that staff should have the same high expectations of SEND students as non-SEND students.

Acknowledging that HGSS has a high number of students with EHCPs, it is important to ensure their needs are being met.

Ms Selby Boothroyd, SEND Governor, asked to receive a copy of the SEND Review report from the Review. She would contact Mrs Hawkins, SENDCo, to arrange a SEND governor visit.

**ACTION:** SEND feedback to be a focus for the next meeting.

## 10 YEAR 11 MOCKS

KJ highlighted the following areas for development:

- HPA student progress
- Progress in MfL – Sir William Borlase’s Grammar School are supporting this department. They visit every half-term, moderate exams and help with speaking. A Language Support Assistant who is returning to teaching is working with Year 10 students.
- Progress in Drama – An external teacher is supporting Drama in Years 10 and 11 currently. Drama is not being offered as a GCSE for the current Year 8s as the teaching is not yet secure. An advert has been placed for a Head of Performing Arts.
- Progress of boys achieving English
- Students achieving EBACC

*When did the support start for MfL?*

The support was put in place for October half-term to support the Acting Head of Department who is new to teaching. Teachers at Sir William Borlase’s School are offering knowledge and experience. All MfL teachers currently employed are qualified teachers. Students are being supported to obtain a Grade 5 by undertaking the foundation level paper although governors need to be aware that this will affect the Progress 8 score.

*Is the school anticipating that many Year 8 students might not be intending to select an MfL subject as an option choice?*

PT explained that the expectation at HGSS is that students in W and E sets will take a language for GCSE. PT reminded governors that schools are obliged to support pupils to cover Ebacc subjects.

*Are we setting pupils up to fail if we are encouraging pupils to opt for a GCSE for which progress is recognised as poor? This is exacerbated because students now have one less option choice than was previously the case?*

KJ agreed to speak to Mr Hillyard to ensure that he covers the benefit of taking a MfL subject at GCSE and the rationale and benefit of taking GCSE RS in his speech to parents at the Year 8 Options evening.

KJ/EH

Governors requested that further subject-specific feedback be provided for MfL in terms current plans and longer term plans in respect of KS3 and KS4.

**ACTION:** A report on MfL to be provided for the next meeting.

KJ

- 11 GOVERNORS DAY FEEDBACK**  
Governors noted the feedback from the recent Governors Day.

PT thanked governors for their involvement in this day.

- 12 EQUALITIES**  
**Gender Neutral PE Curriculum**  
*Do all students have the opportunity to do the same sports irrespective of their gender and training?*

PT explained that they did, staffing permitting, but not together. PE is taught in rotations so this will be relevant also. All curriculum options can be accessed via the website.

**ACTION:** It was agreed that PT would circulate his briefing note on this subject and governors would check the PE curriculum details on the website.

**PT  
L&C committee**

- 13 OFSTED TRAINING**  
The Chair asked, in the light of the recent Ofsted training, whether governors felt that they were adequately prepared for OFSTED and clear on the curriculum intent. It was noted that Challenge Partners had commented that staff were not clear about this. Governors also needed to be clear about the rationale for option choices, the Key Stage 3 curriculum (how do we know it offers students a good experience?), transition and progression points in general, the quality of education throughout the curriculum and curriculum intent.

Governors were reminded that the Curriculum Intent and progression documents are all on the website.

**ACTION:** OFSTED to be a focus for the next meeting and a report to be provided covering the above and progress since the last inspection.

**PT/ES  
Agenda item**

- 14 POLICY REVIEWS AND APPROVALS**  
Following review, it was agreed to approve the following policies:
- **CEIAG**
  - **Sex and Relationships**
  - **SMSC**
  - **Examinations** – subject to a definition of ‘the centre’ being included as well as any other comments to be sent by Mr Barrett to the Clerk.
  - **Literacy and Numeracy** - subject to references to SLT being amended to read Head of Department (HoD).

**15 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2019 having been circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record and would be made available for inspection in school.

**16 DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS**

Dates of future meetings would be as per the new meeting schedule already circulated, the next one being on Tuesday 2 June 2020 at **18.00**.

**17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**18 EVALUATION OF MEETING**

In terms of impact, governors

- Sought information to help them monitor progress against the SIP priorities of relevance to this committee;
- Received information about the action being undertaken in Year 13 for each department that is predicting lower than Alps 3;
- Discussed and agreed a process to enable them to consider in more detail each of the SIP objectives at subsequent meetings;
- Questioned the effectiveness of software packages used by school to support students' learning and revision and requested more information for the next meeting;
- Agreed that SEND would be a focus for the next meeting;
- Questioned the school about the areas identified for further development in the light of the Year 11 mocks and requested a further report on MfL for the next meeting;
- Agreed that Ofsted should be a focus for the next meeting;
- Approved policies in line with the school schedule to ensure compliance.

The meeting closed at 20.15

Signed ..... Date .....

CHAIRMAN