

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

THE WAY THE OPEN ACADEMY GOVERNING BODY CARRIES OUT ITS FUNCTIONS. – reflecting on 2017-2018

The Full Governing Body meets at least 5 times a year. The full governors meeting is the key meeting where all governors are involved in monitoring and reviewing Open Academies' policies and practices. The main agenda items relate to detailed reports so that governors can monitor the way in which the Academy spends the funds available to it. During the last couple of years the funds available have required much more stringent review and challenge about the way funds were being used and required governors to take difficult decisions to reduce expenditure. At all times this was done so that the impact on students was minimised. The second most important area of review is carried out through a very detailed report at each meeting from the Principal. This report is the main way in which we get to know what has happened in the Academy as well as what is planned. The report provides all governors with details of the progress being made in implementing the School Improvement Plan. In addition the results achieved by the school are rigorously examined and all plans for improvement are challenged. The third main function of the full board meetings is to check that all students and staff are safe in their work.

So that detailed scrutiny of the school can be carried out in a timely way the governors operate two standing committees. The Finance and Resources Committee, has responsibility for reviewing and making recommendations to the Full Board on all matters relating to the school budget, staffing and the use of the premises. In addition reports are also received about ways in which the school works with the wider community particularly where this requires the expenditure of resources or use of school premises. This committee initiated a separate review of the 6th form during the year and this will be received by full governors in the Autumn Term 2017.

The second committee is the one that focuses on the standards achieved and the curriculum provided in the school. This committee examines the way all students are being educated and not just the examination groups. It receives reports for scrutiny about student progress, the provision for the students who have special needs, the breadth of curriculum including those outside the normal range of lessons including school visits and wider activities. Particular attention is given to SEND and to safeguarding and to any changes in the curriculum and examinations. Finally the committee is the main forum for governors to monitor the quality of teaching across the Academy.

The governors have to set up disciplinary panels as required. This could relate to staff discipline but thankfully no such panels were required again in the last year. Student disciplinary panels are sadly still required and governors take their responsibilities relating to the exclusion of students very seriously. All governors have undergone additional training for this responsibility in the last year.

Governors have continued to set up an ad hoc committee of three governors called the 'Improving Standards Group' (ISG). This committee met 6 times. In recent years this committee has focused on subjects or faculties where standards were considered not good enough or where new approaches needed more detailed monitoring. In the last year governors used this committee more as a training or updating mechanism. Standards had risen in recent years and no particular area was identified for deeper scrutiny. The purpose was to ensure that Senior Leaders were completely au fait with the changes in assessment and that there would be no drop in performance as a result of lack of understanding of the new exam requirements.

Governors continued to attend the subject / faculty Link meetings. These are termly meetings where the Principal / Vice Principal hold middle leaders to account alongside their Senior Leadership Team (SLT) link. This is a valuable mechanism through which governors get to know the details underlying the work of individual faculties, get a sense of confidence in the middle leaders and the way SLT holds them to account.

In addition to the link meeting responsibilities all governors have links to important areas of the Academy's work such as SEND, Pupil Premium, Safeguarding, careers, Educational visits. A key area for improvement in the coming year is to gain greater consistency in the way in which these responsibilities are carried out, the number and effectiveness of visits to the Academy and initiating a system of more regular visit notes relating to these responsibilities.

Governors have carried out a skills and governing body self-evaluation during the year and these are used to look at areas of training need and for the recruitment of new governors. Renewed attention needs to be given to recruiting parent governors as this has been a sad lack in the last two years.

Governors have also carried out the Principal's performance management and ensured that the process is effectively carried out across the whole school. External reviews of the school are always welcomed and governors take part in these when required. An external adviser is used in the Principal's performance review and the Regional School Commissioner's adviser carried out a review in April. The report was very positive and was reported to the Full Governing Body.

Fred Corbett September 2017*(reviewing the Governing Body based on the last year's activity).*