



The Royal Harbour Academy

Governors' Annual Report Academic Year 2020 – 2021

Although this has been an exceptionally difficult year and the Board has had to combine face-to-face meetings and visits with online meetings and discussions, we have made considerable progress as a group to help support and oversee the school's progress.

The Chair of Governors' Role

The chair has conducted staff interviews for the role of Head of Science and Associate Senior Leaders and has played a leading role in recruiting and developing new governors. This has 'freshened up' the FGB and allowed for new ideas and a more innovative approach. He has also dealt with some complaints from staff and students, all of which were satisfactorily resolved.

The chair has had very regular contact with the leadership team and, together with the Assistant Chair, believes we have created a healthy relationship that is both supportive and challenging, when the circumstances require it. The FGB is actively involved in crucial decision-making and its involvement in helping to lead and manage the school is genuinely appreciated and respected by the SLT.

Training has been undertaken in the following: school finance, chairing skills, OFSTED preparation, safeguarding, Headteacher performance management, county briefings.

Safeguarding

The chair of the FGB has continued in his role as safeguarding lead, maintaining regular contact with the DSL, visiting the school in a safeguarding capacity, and reviewing this critical area of school life during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns. He has reported that Royal Harbour Academy has excelled itself in terms of ensuring student safety and that its staff provide a safe environment. Both DSL's have risen to the very difficult safeguarding circumstances created by the pandemic, and by supporting them and reviewing data and processes, the chair reports that the school will come out of the pandemic in position to strongly support our students. Interviews with students have also been undertaken, which has provided excellent evidence of how the school has supported vulnerable students.

Teaching and Learning

The monitoring of teaching and learning has inevitably been dominated by Covid-19 and the school's response to rapidly changing circumstances. A mixture of actual and virtual visits took place, focusing on the physical precautions in place, the remodelling of the curriculum, remote learning and the recovery plan. For each visit the school provided evidence of forward thinking, planning and a determination to maintain the progress with teaching and learning that had been achieved by the end of the last academic year. The challenges have been enormous, but the Governing Body should be proud of the efforts made by the leadership and all staff to ensure that no student has been disadvantaged by the closure of the school. From distribution of devices, work packs (often by hand), free school breakfasts and meals, the school has also been highly proactive at chasing attendance to remote lessons. Wellbeing of both students and staff is at the heart of planning for recovery. Lack of

clarity from the DfE has meant that planning has sometimes had to be reactive, and the process of awarding TAGS has meant an extremely heavy workload for teachers, however the process has been done in alignment with other CAT schools.

In addition to frequent contact with the leadership team to ascertain the school's responses to the reopening, closing and reopening again, training has been undertaken in the following: OFSTED preparation, dealing with complaints, wellbeing, monitoring visits – as a result of which a policy has been written and published. Using the 'Governor Hub' portal has been a very effective way of feeding back what has been learned on these courses to the rest of the governing body.

SEND

The Governor with this responsibility has met regularly with the SENCOs, monitoring the school's SEN plan and reviewing the policy, ensuring that it reflects the practice in school.

They have also scrutinised transition arrangements for students with SEN.

Combined with Teaching and Learning visits, book scrutinies and observation of classroom practice have been fed back to the FGB.

Most significantly a monitoring plan has been developed for 2021-22 with the SENCO and Headteacher to set agendas for termly meetings so that all relevant policies are reviewed on a programmed basis to ensure that all guidance is current and up to date. Interventions and impact are also being monitored regularly.

Careers

Governor support is available at all times and visits this year have confirmed that The Royal Harbour Academy has improved careers provision significantly and is in line with all government directives as well as strategic planning to ensure the four main areas of compliance are met and that they are complimented with a wide provision of activity across all age groups, tailored to the age and stage of the young people and captured on Compass as required.

The areas of compliance are

- i) Student access to a wide range of education and Training Providers Years 8-13 T Levels, Apprenticeships. A policy document must be published.
<https://www.rha.kent.sch.uk/assets/Uploads/CEIAG-Policy-Jan-2020.pdf>
- ii) Students must have access to high quality independent Careers Guidance (member of CDI). (Mr J Handley, member of the CDI).
- iii) High quality CEIAG meeting all requirements and measured in accordance with the *national 'Good Career Guidance Gatsby Benchmarks. Example*
<https://www.rha.kent.sch.uk/assets/Uploads/Careers/GATSBY-BENCHMARK-Year10.pdf>
- iv) Publication of Careers programme on the school website
<https://www.rha.kent.sch.uk/about-us/careers/>

During the challenging months of the pandemic virtual access to one hundred and fifteen local, regional and national employers has been made possible, giving students some much needed information to continue planning the future. <https://ebpkentvirtualltours.co.uk/> Face to face events did not take place during this time but every effort was made to pilot and deliver a virtual substitute. The challenge of Work Experience not being possible on a wide scale this academic year was also actioned by the provision of a blended Virtual Work Experience Programme including live interaction with employers. The Careers Governor has liaised closely with the staff member charged with organising Careers education and has supported and advised throughout, maximising her many links with local employers.

Finance

The role of school Finance Governor is a partnership with the Business Manager to ensure that the school complies with the school's Finance Policy, which in essence means that taxpayers' money is spent wisely. Our main achievement has been to reduce the inherited financial deficit and the associated bank overdraft. Every year the school produces the annual budget that the FGB has to authorize and each month the Finance Governor and the Business Manager look at the latest forecast for the annual budget and question any deviations to analyse and scrutinise the financial performance. Pupil numbers are the foundations for a financially sound school and obviously, this year, it has been harder to let the local community know what the school is achieving.

A finance committee meets outside of the full FGB meetings, new members have attended the necessary training. They and the FGB have carefully analysed any capital expenditure and challenged the school as necessary. The main achievement this year in conjunction with the Business Manager has been to install a financial discipline at the school in order to reduce our bank overdraft.

Pupil Premium

The Governor with this brief is new in post and has visited the school to look at how the Pupil Premium money has been allocated this year and also how this has aligned with the Covid Recovery Plan. Monitoring has kept the FGB up to date with the reviews and updates to planning to ensure both academic and pastoral support has been effective.

Health and Safety

The Governor has continued to work to promote a positive culture of sensible Health and Safety at work management throughout all of the school activities, ensuring that the school complies with its statutory duties and that employees at Royal Harbour are in a safe and healthy environment to work. This has been achieved through regular rigorous health and safety meetings with all stakeholders across sites and holding to account the management team when issues arise. All policies and procedures that concern health and safety including fire management are up to date and these are being widely shared with the staff body.

Website

Through overseeing the school's website compliance, the governor has ensured that the website complies with all that is published in the Department for Education's "What maintained schools must publish online" This has involved regular meetings with the Head of School and the website management team. Through this work we are confident that parents and carers are always up to date and have the best information should they require it during their time at Royal Harbour Academy.

Miscellaneous

Governors have completed statutory training in the Prevent Duty, Safeguarding and GDPR.

Governors wrote individual 'thank you' letters to all teaching and non-teaching staff to thank them for their incredibly committed approach to the students during such a difficult year.

Some governors were able to assist with the delivery of free school meals during the winter lockdown and the return to school Covid-19 mass testing of students in March.



Our priorities for academic year 2021 – 2022

- To monitor how effectively the school manages the impact of social media and online threats upon the safeguarding of students. To ensure the school uses their social media effectively and positively to promote wellbeing.
- To assist the school to bring the two sites together via a shared vision of the 'flightpath' of RHA students from 11 – 18, ensuring commonality of standards, SEND provision and CPD.
- To encourage engagement with parents and stakeholders.
- To ensure that International Baccalaureate re-authorisation in 2022 (for the outstanding Sixth Form IBCP) is successful.
- To continue to reduce the financial deficit while ensuring maintenance of quality of educational provision.