

Governors annual report 2022 - 2023

The year has been incredibly busy and productive for the school and the governing board. In addition to the continued focus on attainment, safeguarding, and financial soundness a lot of time has been spent preparing for academisation and integration within the Coastal Academies Trust. The academisation process ultimately went smoothly with much effort from our Business Manager and Finance Team and with oversight from our Finance Governor and Governing Board. We are now fully integrated within CAT and looking forward to a positive future. Through the year the finances of the school have been closely monitored and we have been able to contribute needed finances to the school buildings. The governing body have been busy. We have introduced a new governor to the team and are looking forward to adding further governors in the new school year. Particularly of interest is adding another parent governor. Whilst a number of governor visits have occurred throughout the year looking at a number of areas we are looking forward to increasing the number of such visits in this coming year. We have recently conducted further visits to review the teaching of certain areas of the curriculum. Governors have focussed on Safeguarding, Finance, the use of Pupil Premium funding, SEND provision, and Careers as well as attainment during the course of the year.

In this coming year, based on our new structure within CAT, governor responsibilities will be re-evaluated and re-assigned to get greater focus where needed. As noted, we look forward to a productive year.

The vice chair of the Governing Body has been responsible for safeguarding, wellbeing and has been a member of the Curriculum Group. It is important that regular safeguarding visits are carried out, and this has been done each half term. Each visit includes a check to see the school's single central record is up to date (this records the safeguarding checks on all adults who come into the school) and this is always scrupulously maintained. Visits have included a full analysis of all the challenges faced by the students at the school, any interventions and how they are logged. Across the year, all the pastoral support team have been spoken with, including the Family Liaison Officer, staff supporting vulnerable students, ACES co-ordinator (where provision is made for students following a different pathway) and obviously the Safeguarding lead. It is always important to seek the views of students, and this has been done each time across both sites.

The dedication of the support team is both humbling and impressive, students speak warmly of the staff who support them and the value they attach to that help that they receive. Visits have included time in the wellbeing rooms on both sites to see how they are so vital for the students who use them. The school engages with many outside agencies and ensures that where there is a need it is addressed. Record keeping is meticulous.

Wellbeing of staff and students is very important to the school's leadership and the Employee Assistance Programme is utilised to support staff, alongside consultations with staff for reducing workload and examining ways to make the workplace more supportive. The safeguarding visits have shown that both heads of sites are fully committed to ensuring the students and their staff are supported.

In terms of curriculum visits the Vice Chair looked at both science and maths departments, spoke to their subject leads and saw lessons across different year groups. It has been interesting to see the progress that is being made in terms of unifying the approach to learning across the two school sites, and there is a genuine momentum to continue improving the

curriculum offer. The staff have appreciated time to plan together, and this is something that will be important across the board going forward.

Across the last year, the Governor responsible for SEND has visited regularly to check the school's provision. To begin with, that the school's policy and website were updated and compliant. This included discussions with the SENCO about the SEN progress being made and how the school has provided information including the local offer, in an easy to negotiate way for parents. Meetings and discussions with the SENCOs had a focus on how pupil and parent voice was promoted for SEN students. The SENCOs provided detail on how support beyond the Annual Review process and In year review meetings was in place for students with an EHCP and for those with SEN needs without an EHCP.

Another area of focus were the 20 students in year 7, with an EHCP. The SENCOs had worked well with all professionals and reported that all students made progress and are successfully progressing into the year 8 cohort in September.

Similar success was reported for the Year 11 students with an EHCP, with most students progressing onto their first choice of post 16 education, including remaining at RHA. One specific success is a year 13 student who completed their IB and is progressing on to train to be a TA. Students with SEN and without an EHCP also made similar progress with all students going on to an FE provision or being supported to gain a September placement.

The School has been recognised for successfully implementing practices from the Nurture Network and the Local Authority, who invited the SENCOs to present at the Kent SEN event. In addition to this One of the SENCOs also presented a workshop at the NASEN event for SENCOs nationally. The school has hosted visits from other providers to share best practice. For the governing body the SENCOs have provided a training session to increase awareness for all governors and our SEND governor has worked with KCC on the pilot scheme for SEN training for governors across Kent. Two of our Governors also undertook training in SEND understanding and awareness.

Continued monitoring for SEN from the LA and the CAT have been implemented and the reports show that SEN implementation at the school has been strong.

During the first six months of this past academic year, the School's Finance Governor continued to work with the School Business Manager to ensure that the school continued to spend its income of £8million wisely and in accordance with the School's Finance Policy and the budget that was approved by the Full Governing Body. We saw income rise as our pupil numbers increased and we managed to carry out some major refurbishments on the Upper School site. The school received additional funding in the wake of the Covid Pandemic which we monitored to ensure that this money, as well other grants like Pupil Premium, was directed to the pupils who were most in need. The governors challenged the school to ensure that all resources were utilized to their full potential. Three years ago the school had an overdraft with our bank in the region of £930,000 . By April 2023 we had a slight surplus in our bank. We are not aware of any other school in England and Wales of reducing their budget deficit so swiftly and effectively and yet at the same time improving the outcomes of our staff and pupils. It was clearly a great team effort for all staff and governors.

In April 2023 our school joined Coastal Academies Trust (CAT) and we ceased to be a local authority (KCC) school. This means that CAT and not the local governors, is

responsible for setting the school's budget, writing the School's Finance Policy and ensuring that the school directs its resources in the best way. The "Full Governing Body" that made decisions in conjunction with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team ceased to exist when we joined CAT. Instead, we have a School Board which will continue to challenge the CAT who give their schools a large degree of autonomy in how the schools are run. The school board will continue to work to ensure the successful futures of RHA students.

The role of the careers Governor is to ensure that all registered students are provided with independent careers guidance from year 7 to year 13 and to ensure that the independent careers guidance is presented impartially and includes information on the range of education, training and employment options, including apprenticeships, Further Education College and other vocational pathways for the young people.

Provider Access Legislation came into force during this academic year from January 2023. This requires that schools must provide at least six encounters with providers of technical education or apprenticeships for all their students during school years 8-13. This Careers' work is designed, planned and lead by Mr S Wall with support from all Curriculum leads and all staff as required by the programme. Work experience, work tasters and interviews with employers spark off ideas, as do visits to FE (part of a local NEET prevention strategy). This Careers work is done to create opportunities for students' personal experience of employment and adult life of business, financial and HR skills, vocational skills and the preparation involved for a well-planned progression from The Royal Harbour Academy to the next stage of every student's journey. The local Labour Market Information of the area where the school is located makes this one of the most critical services provided to students. The careers Governor has oversight of the school's careers provision and ensures that the careers policy is up-to date and consistent with the annual careers delivery plan. This has also involved examining the use of Pupil Premium to look at whether it being used to good effect, and destination data embedded as part of the school's overall use of raising attainment, achievement, and attendance with purpose.

Finally the careers Governor has very successfully piloted and partaken in the Volunteer Reading Scheme to support Key Stage 3 students increase their literacy Skills, alongside another Governor responsible for oversight of the curriculum. This scheme has been a great success and more volunteers are currently being recruited.

This governor was appointed in 2022 and has undertaken monitoring visits looking at the core subjects and how they are delivered. As curriculum Governor she has focused on the challenge present in lessons, discussing with subject leads how this is delivered to encourage aspiration in the students and interest in metacognition (critical awareness of thinking and understanding). She has looked at the cohesion of the curriculum across the 2 sites and discussed the use of data to ensure that the school has a clear understanding of the progression of all of its students.

One of the great successes of 2022-23 was the successful authorisation from the International Baccalaureate Organisation of the Middle Years Programme. On the back of the re-authorisation of the IB Careers Related Programme in the 6th Form, this is something the school should be very proud of and the Curriculum Governor was able to utilise her experience of instigating and delivering an MYP programme in a local Grammar School when speaking to the authorisation team. She was able to articulate the importance of this curriculum to the students and the curriculum.

The parent Governor has had the pleasure of attending learning walks within the upper site and witnessed the students participating in lessons. Working at the upper site means she has the added bonus of witnessing the school strive daily for excellence. As a proud member of staff in addition, she is now ELSA (Emotional literacy support) trained, which means she will be continuing to support some of the most Vulnerable students in school and collaborating with other staff to ensure the students can access all aspects of education and feel included. To this end she is taking on the role of analysing the school's use of Pupil Premium and catch-up funds.

The staff Governor is also one of the SENCOs, and thus has supported the SEN governor and Headteacher by providing regular information on student progress and development for students with SEN. A highlight has been delivering training to governors on our SEN classroom strategies. He has also volunteered to support the governors by inspecting the school's website compliance and publication of policies and was pleased with the updates made this year.

Finally, as a Governing Body we are trying to show how much we value the work of the staff at RHA and in the summer term contributed to an afternoon of ice creams for the staff! We also wrote individual thank you cards at the end of term to express our gratitude for all the work that all of the staff put in: teaching, support, catering, administrative, cleaning and site staff. It will be exciting to see how the school will continue to develop and improve in the next academic year.

Training has been undertaken this year in the following areas:

FGM (Female genital mutilation)

Prevent

SEND for non-SEND Governors

Chairing skills

Role of the training Governor

Supporting Trans, non-Binary and gender diverse pupils and staff

Safeguarding

Preparation for OFSTED

Diabetes awareness basic and advanced

Monitoring Visits

Governor Induction

Our priorities for 2023 – 24

- To support the school's drive for improved academic standards by frequent visits and interviews with subject leads.
- To work with the school to help promote wellbeing among both students and staff.
- To support the school's drive to improve attendance and stakeholder engagement.