

Tavistock College Governing Body Annual Report December 2019

During 2018-19, governors at Tavistock College implemented a Governor Action Plan. Linked to the school improvement objectives, the plan assisted in retaining focus and energy on school improvement and strengthening governance. The plan has now been refreshed and re-issued to align with supporting academy improvement objectives and the strengthening of governance.

Alongside the action plan, a governor appraisal process has begun implementation. The process was trialled during the previous academic year and simplified before implementing during 2019. To date half of the governing body have undertaken an appraisal, with the remainder planned for completion by the end of term.

In addition to committee meetings, governors are active across the school, carrying out regular faculty reviews involving staff, students and taking account of historical data, helping to triangulate information and data to provide an holistic and realistic view of improvement across the school. Governor findings are reported to SLT and Heads of Faculty and feed into the ongoing cycle of Teaching & Learning reviews and staff appraisals.

Governors also support recruitment and selection procedures, particularly those for middle and senior leaders.

The exam results show the school to be on a good upwards trajectory. In the coming year Governors will maintain scrutiny and challenge of the academy improvement plan and associated data, to support in maintaining the trend.

A governor Skills Audit is completed each year, helping governors to judge how far they as individuals are progressing in their knowledge. Additionally the skills map highlights areas where specific expertise or development is required in order to ensure we have the necessary skills to create and maintain forward momentum at all times.

We experienced some issues with governor attendance at meetings, and at school events. This was tackled by producing a school events calendar. Although time consuming to build, this initiative has resulted in a much stronger and more consistent visible governor presence at school events.

The Resources Committee has been frustrated with the lack of information from the MAT, particularly relating to the school budget and finances. Compounded by issues of poor communication, this has greatly hampered the ability of governors to discharge their delegated role with confidence. There has been no solution forthcoming on this matter and at this moment of time, there are tensions between delegated responsibilities and the receipt of the information necessary to discharge those responsibilities.

The current work in progress to reform the Scheme of Delegation will, it is hoped, resolve the tensions as we move into 2020.

Improvement in governance over the past year has included:

Together; we care, we challenge, we excel

- a. We have further developed a tiered Induction process for new Governors. The new process has been trialled by three new governors, and feedback is positive.
All new governors are encouraged to attend an induction training session.
- b. We have implemented a governor appraisal system, based on the NGA 'ten steps to good governance'.
- c. All governors take responsibility for heading Faculty Reviews, participating in Policy Reviews, and attending events on behalf of the governing body.
- d. We have successfully made the transition to a fully cloud-based school email and document system.
- e. Individual development needs are discussed through the governor appraisal system, as well as in regular circulars and reminders of available training and resources.
All governors are regularly urged to attend relevant training and/or refreshers, particularly in relation to basic needs to enable effective challenge and interrogation of data and reports, i.e. data, finance, recruitment, appraisal.
- f. We value the importance of good succession planning, and are fortunate in attracting an extremely high calibre of people interested in becoming a governor. We are active in encouraging recruitment to Associate Membership, a status which enables a paced induction and gradually acquired experience and learning of the school, This means that when a vacancy on the board occurs, we have someone ready to step up and hit the ground running.

Areas for improvement in 2020:

The refreshed Governor Action Plan will set out the basic activities and actions required of governors to support school improvement.

It is desirable to build capacity and strength through encouraging more governors to look at taking responsibility as Governor Lead in various areas (e.g. Health & Safety, SEND, Safeguarding, Physical Education, Community/Career development etc).

Additionally, we would like to see more governors stepping forward to shadow Vice Chairs / Committee Chairs, thereby growing confidence and experience to secure a strength of succession.

This is also desirable in respect of the role of Trustee. Tavistock feels it important to ensure a continuing representation at Trust Board level, and would very much like to see and assist towards a steady growth of trust and communication between the central MAT and individual schools.

Chair of Governors
Tavistock College