

**Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body of Walthamstow School for Girls
2020-21**

The Governing Body's three core strategic functions are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school
2. Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and for the performance management of staff
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its funding is spent appropriately

Governance arrangements	<p>The Governing Body of Walthamstow School for Girls consists of a total of 15 governors as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 parent governors 6 co-opted governors 1 local authority governor 1 staff governor <p>and the Headteacher</p>
Membership	<p>There were more changes than usual to the Governing Body membership in 2020-21 as a number of governors came to the end of their terms of office or stepped down:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms J Hayat, co-opted governor and vice chair Ms D Lewzey, co-opted governor (and previously a parent governor) Mr J van Dinteren, co-opted governor and vice chair Ms N Mikolajczyk, parent governor Mr A Ramlagan, staff governor <p>Sincere thanks goes to all of them for their commitment and contribution to the governing body of the school during their terms of office. It takes time and dedication and is entirely voluntary. We wish them all the very best for the future.</p> <p>All but one vacancy arose during/at the end of the summer term, so our new governors joined in autumn 2021.</p>
Meetings	<p>The full Governing Body meets twice in the autumn term, once in the spring term and twice in the summer term. There are two committees which meet once per term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum • Resources (finance, staffing and premises) <p>Each committee reports back to the full Governing Body termly.</p> <p>In addition, the Pay committee meets at least once per year. Its role is to satisfy the Governing Body that pay recommendations (following the completion of annual performance management reviews) and any other pay-related decisions are quality assured and in line with the school's pay and performance management policies.</p>

	<p>The committees look in more detail at specific aspects of the school, to enable the Governing Body to maintain a high level strategic approach to governing the school, as we are required to do. Governors also serve on ad hoc panels to consider pupil disciplinary or staffing matters and appeals if required.</p> <p>Governors participate in recruitment panels when there is a vacancy for a head of faculty or within the leadership team.</p> <p>Details of governors, including their respective roles and responsibilities and other required information, are published in the governing body section of the school website.</p>
Attendance record of governors	All Governing Body and committee meetings must be attended by a specified minimum number of governors for decisions to be binding. Governors have an excellent record of attendance, details of which are published on the school website annually.
Overview	<p>The academic year 2020-21 was again affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Governors were well aware that although all students returned to school in September, school life was still very different for them and for the staff. Students remained in their tutor rooms, while staff moved around the school between lessons in order to prevent the spread of the virus. Lateral flow testing, additional cleaning and hygiene measures as well as the wearing of masks made for an abnormal educational experience. School leaders operated a track and trace system in order to minimise the numbers of students required to isolate due to close contact with virus cases. Governors reviewed the school's risk assessments which were updated regularly during the year due to changes required to schools' operations. These were also overseen by the local authority.</p> <p>By Christmas 2020, Covid cases were accelerating again and on day one of term in January 2021, the Government again told schools to close. Students returned to school on 9 March 2021, but safety restrictions remained in place until the end of the summer term. GCSE exams for summer 2021 did not take place for the second year in a row. Instead schools were asked to provide teacher-assessed grades based on internal testing/assessment. Governors are conscious that this involved many hours of additional work for teachers and school leaders, and were thankful to staff for their hard work and school leaders for the robustness of the process implemented. It is worth noting that although schools did most of the work regarding GCSE grading, schools received little compensation from the exam boards which have mainly issued credit notes for 2022 GCSE exam fees.</p>
Priorities	<p>The Governing Body's main areas of focus during the year were therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to keep all students and staff safe • the mental health and wellbeing of the school community • supporting the school to continue teaching and learning for students, whether in school or remotely • oversight and scrutiny of the process of awarding teacher-assessed grades for Year 11 students • to ensure the school's finances remained stable while adjusting spending priorities in light of Covid requirements and the school's needs • the school's 3- year strategy and school improvement plan 2021-24.

<p>Headteacher appointment</p>	<p>Governors other key priority was to complete the recruitment process and appoint a new headteacher for the school. This process was suspended in March 2020 due to Covid lockdown one. Ms Davies agreed to delay her retirement until December 2020 to maintain the stability of the school during the pandemic. Governors would like to record their thanks once again for her leadership and service to the school over nine years from January, 2012.</p> <p>The recruitment of a new headteacher for the school therefore resumed in September 2020. Governors, the local authority and an experienced external adviser enabled us to complete a robust selection process. The appointment of Ms Helen Marriott as Headteacher of Walthamstow School for Girls was ratified by the Governing Body at a special meeting in October 2020. Ms Marriott joined the school as Headteacher in January, 2021. Unfortunately she did not meet all the students in person until March due to another national lockdown.</p>
<p>Governance impact/ effectiveness</p>	<p>The Governing Body continued to meet remotely throughout 2020-21 due to pandemic. The full schedule of meetings was completed and governors continued to discharge their responsibilities throughout the year. Minutes of our meetings from 2020-21 are available in the governing body section of the school website.</p> <p>Safeguarding oversight continued throughout the year thanks to our safeguarding governor, Ms Balibrea, with reports to the curriculum committee and at governing body meetings by our link governor and also the school's designated safeguarding officer and Assistant Headteacher, Ms Pratt.</p> <p>GCSE grades awarded to students in summer 2020, in the absence of national exams, were reviewed in autumn 2020. Governors were already aware of the very stringent process followed by the school, including rigorous moderation. All grades submitted by schools were then subject to a national standardisation algorithm, the limitations of which were widely commented upon in the media. Comparisons with previous years' results were not meaningful and the DfE did not issue any Progress 8 measures for 2020. Governors noted that the maths grades for a group of 25 students had been moved up from a 4 to a 5 following a review of the school's own moderation which the exam board agreed had been overly strict.</p> <p>Governors also reviewed the Covid-19 learning and teaching strategy for 2020-21 for both on-site and when required, remote learning. Priorities agreed were: student wellbeing; support with readiness for learning; engagement and motivation; use of technology; for collaboration and social connectedness; delivering a broad and balanced curriculum as far as possible. The strategy was published on the school website for all stakeholders.</p> <p>Governor link visits were arranged, but disrupted due to the lockdown and other Covid restrictions being extended. Our annual Governors' Day in school also had to be cancelled at short notice in response to local authority public health advice. Governing bodies were advised by the Department for Education to be mindful of staff workload and not to add to pressures during the year. This advice also applied to the application of the school's performance management system although the Pay committee still met to review pay recommendations.</p>

	<p>Governors agreed the new Headteacher's proposed restructure of the school's leadership team including three permanent Associate Assistant Headteacher roles. Governors served on key senior recruitment panels during the spring and summer 2021 terms including those for Deputy Headteacher (KS4), Teaching School Hub Director, Associate Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion) and a number of acting leadership roles following unsuccessful external recruitment processes. Governors agreed to re-advertise the KS4 Deputy Headteacher /Teaching School Hub Director role early in the autumn term 2021, having agreed to create a role which comprises both the Hub Director and Curriculum/KS4 Deputy roles.</p> <p>Governors noted the school's policy for the awarding of Teacher-Assessed Grades for the 2021 summer GCSEs and noted that the Joint Council on Qualifications had approved the school's policy including the process for arriving at TAGs, the evidence to be used from a range of assessments, tests and records of course and practical work and the moderation and standardisation processes for quality assurance purposes. Governors reviewed sample submissions for individual subjects and observed the levels of detail employed to ensure all students were given the greatest opportunity to achieve their best in order to progress to the next stage of their education. Once again the DfE announced that there would be no Progress 8 or other national accountability data published in autumn 2021 due to the cancellation of GCSE exams.</p> <p>Our new Headteacher, Ms Marriott, led the process to develop a vision and the new 3-year strategic school improvement plan (SIP) for 2021-24 involving the leadership team, staff and governors. Students and parents/carers were also consulted about the vision and priorities. In July 2021, the Governing Body reviewed the new draft SIP vision and key priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student wellbeing • staff wellbeing • pedagogy for achievement and progress • leadership and coaching development. <p>Governors agreed the final draft of the SIP could be ratified in the autumn term. Progress with annual plans for achieving the aims of the SIP would be reported regularly at committee meetings and monitored by the Governing Body on a termly basis.</p>
Teaching School Hub	<p>In February 2021, the school learned that the application to become a Teaching School Hub - submitted in October 2020 by the retiring Headteacher, Ms Davies - had been successful. Teaching School Hubs are new and replace the previous Teaching School designations from the Department for Education. WSfG was the only state-maintained secondary school to be chosen to lead one of the 87 Hubs as centres of excellence for teacher training and development over the next three years. The NE London Teaching School Hub is responsible for an area covering the boroughs of Haringey, Redbridge and Waltham Forest comprising 239 schools.</p> <p>The Governing Body of WSfG is responsible for governance oversight of the NE London Teaching School Hub. Our role is set out in the Hub's governance handbook. We will receive a termly report from the Hub Director and from</p>

	autumn 2021, a panel of three governors will carry out an annual review of the Hub and will report back to the Governing Body's December meeting.
Finally	<p>We thanked Ms Davies and wished her a happy retirement in December 2020 after nine successful years as Headteacher, gaining an outstanding Ofsted judgement, a Teaching School and Hub designation and many annual SSAT education awards.</p> <p>We welcomed Ms Marriott as the school's new Headteacher in January 2021.</p> <p>In July 2021, we wished Ms Kennedy every success in her first headship at a school in Suffolk. She left WSfG after seven years as Deputy Headteacher (KS4) and latterly as Associate Headteacher, having joined in 2012 as Head of English.</p>
How to contact the Governing Body	The Governing Body would be pleased to receive comments/questions from parents/carers. Please contact the Chair of Governors via the school office or via info@wsfg.waltham.sch.uk