

## THOMAS ALLEYNE ACADEMY

Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Local Governing Body of the Academy  
held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014  
at the Thomas Alleynes Academy, High Street, Stevenage  
commencing at 6:00 pm.

**Governors present:** Alan Euinton (AE), Jonathan Ellam (JE), Mark Lewis (ML), Eirwen Palmer (EP), Roger Luxton (RL), Carol Hayman (CH), Julia Cooke (JC), Dr Rod Pullen (RP), Sarah Carter (SC), Alan Browne (AB), Howard Crompton (HC), Lynsey Steadman (LS), Keith Turner (KT)

**In attendance:** Signe Sutherland (SS), Julia Flanagan (JF), Richard Thwaites (RT), Kaylee Bonja (KB)

Alan welcomed Signe Sutherland, Chair of NHSST, to the meeting. She will present agenda item 3. Alan advised that Richard Thwaites would attend Part 2 of the meeting.

### Summary of Decisions & Action Points

Item	Decision/Action	Responsible for follow-up	Timing
3	i. It was unanimously agreed for AE to continue as Chair of the LGB and for JE to continue as Vice Chair	None	
	ii. Proposed new structure - LGB to feedback any queries regarding the proposed to ML	All/ML	Immediate
	iii. Proposed leadership structure – it was agreed to accept the proposal in principle, subject to detailed job description which would be presented at the next meeting	AE/KB	Next Meeting
6	Governor absence from meetings – to be reviewed at the end of the year	AE/KB	August
	Pupil Premium Funding – monitoring is ongoing	SLT	Ongoing
	NUT strike day 26 <sup>th</sup> March – LGB asked Mark to convey their thanks to the senior team for keeping the school open	ML	Immediate
	Finance Link governor – LGB to contact KB if they would like to consider this role	All	Immediate
7	Funding Formula – RT to explain to LGB after new budget has been agreed – 30 minutes to be allowed	RT/KB	July
	Rates and rate relief – RT to provide a reconciliation to give a fuller explanation	RT	Immediate
	Future budgets and accounts – RT to provide greater level of detail, showing more cost centres	RT	Immediate

	Cost Centre sub headings – LGB to let RT know what sub headings they would like in the 2014/2015 budget	All	Immediate
	Schools' Finance Manager – the post to be advertised again, in the meantime RT has been engaged part-time to focus on the schools' finances	ML	Immediate
8	Kirkland Rowell survey to be an agenda item at the next meeting. ML agreed to look at the historic data	KB/ML	Next Meeting
	TASA summer fair on 14 <sup>th</sup> June, LGB invited to attend	All	14 <sup>th</sup> June
10	Review of Policies – JE to forward previous list to AE	JE	Immediate
11	Minutes for March Trust meeting to be circulated to LGB	KB	Immediate
	Proposed new structure – to be presented at the governor conference on 9 <sup>th</sup> July, 2-7 at the Goldsmith Centre, Letchworth	KB	9 <sup>th</sup> July
12	Learning Walk – the next Learning Walk will take place on 4 <sup>th</sup> June from 8.30am -12.00 noon.	All	4 <sup>th</sup> June
	HASG training event to take place next week, JE to attend and feedback to be given to ML	JE/ML	Immediate
	Herts for Learning are holding a governors forum on 24 <sup>th</sup> June – governors are invited to attend. Attendees to feedback to AE	All	24 <sup>th</sup> June
13	Senior student team to be invited to attend the next meeting	KB	Next Meeting

### Detailed Minutes

#### **Part 1:**

##### **1. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

##### **2. Declarations of Interest**

AE asked if there were any declarations of interest not already recorded. There were none.

##### **3. NHSST Development**

i. SS said she was delighted to be at the meeting and was pleased to note that the school had had one of its best years in recent times. SS asked AE to leave the room for the following discussion. SS said that the original intention was that AE should be interim Chair for a period of 6-8 months. She added that he had grown in stature and is working very well with everyone. ML added that AE is regularly in school and they have developed a strong working relationship. AE challenges ML appropriately and is very supportive. ML feels that AE has facilitated ML's professional development over the last 8 months. SS said that JE was intending to step in as Chair but that changes in his

circumstances now prevent that for happening. JE explained that his business circumstances had changed and he wished to withdraw from the proposed role of Chair. He is happy to continue as Vice Chair and is happy to support AE in a continued role as Chair. AB asked if it was known how AE feels about continuing in the role and SS replied she has discussed it with him and he would be delighted. Agreed unanimously for AE to continue as Chair of the Local Governing Body (LGB). AE was invited back into the room and informed of the decision.

ii. SS gave a presentation on the proposed new structure of North Hertfordshire Studio School Trust (NHSST) and North Hertfordshire College (NHC). A document titled 'Proposal re Board and Committee structure' had been circulated in advance of the meeting. A large scale diagram of the proposed structure was tabled.

KT arrived

SS invited questions about the proposal.

EP asked where the NHSST representatives would come from – would they be local governors or directors?

SS replied that the solicitors had inserted directors in the diagram but that she was open to change and that a debate could take place.

RL asked if any changes to the LGBs were proposed.

SS responded that no changes to the LGBs are proposed. The LGBs work well and do a great job.

JE asked if the LGBs would continue to recommend actions to the trust and would the trust be required to seek permissions from NHC.

SS said that the LGBs would continue to make recommendations to the trust but that the trust is a separate and autonomous legal entity. Therefore, it does not require permissions from NHC. It was clarified that the arrowed lines on the proposed structure diagram indicate flow of information, not lines of authority.

JE asked how the appeals process would work. SS said that appeals would flow to the trust. ML added that it was recognised that policies and procedures would need to be reviewed to fit the proposed structure.

JE asked what influence would NHC have on the Trust.

SS said that as the sponsor organisation NHC has responsibilities for the Trust. These include a duty of care and probity. SS agreed to provide more information on the duties of a sponsor organisation separately.

JE asked what is the Quality Standards Group and how would it impact on the trust. SS explained that the group is NHCs equivalent of the individual schools' quality management processes. It has been acknowledged by the working party that put together the proposal that the schools' methods for quality management are perfectly adequate and that they should continue unchanged.

SS concluded by informing the LGB that the next meeting of the working party would take place in early June. She invited feedback, queries and any concerns about the proposed changes to be directed to ML.

iii. ML and JF were asked to leave the room for this item. A chart showing the proposed leadership structure for the three schools was tabled. SS informed the LGB that Donna Lodge, Principal of the Da Vinci Studio Schools, had resigned. Donna had done a fantastic job setting up the two schools and she was going to take up a headship at a grammar school for girls in Kent. The timing of Donna's resignation was not good as it the deadline for teacher resignations is imminent (31 May) so it would be challenging to recruit a strong headteacher for a September start. ML had also flagged up several times the lack of cohesion between the three schools. The proposed leadership structure is something that was envisaged for implementation in the next 1-2 years. SS gave a PowerPoint presentation.

SS will take the same presentation and proposal to the Da Vinci LGB meetings next week.

Several concerns were raised. These related mainly to ML's high level of visibility within the school and the impact this has on students and staff. There were concerns that the Da Vinci Schools gain would be to the detriment of the Thomas Alleyne Academy and that all progress made under ML's leadership could be lost. SS gave assurance that ML's level of visibility would not diminish considerably and that a strong leadership team would be in place at each of the schools. The governors sought an assurance that the Academy will continue to move forward as it has over the last 2 years.

The creation of interim posts was discussed with the national advertising of posts before December 2014.

SS added that job description for the new posts had not been detailed in full yet as it was the intention to consult with LGBs before progressing any further with the proposal.

RT arrived

Salary levels and budget for the proposal was discussed. There was concern that the proposed salary level would not attract good principals to each of the schools. SS said that AE, RT and ML are working on the budgets for 2014/15 and they will work the costing of the proposal into the budget. RT explained this is the reason why the presentation of the 2014/15 budget has been deferred to the June LGB meeting. SS was asked when the proposed structure would be implemented. This would be 1<sup>st</sup> September.

It was agreed to accept the proposal in principle. Detailed job description would be presented at the next meeting and the concerns raised will be discussed further. SS thanked the governors for their time and left the meeting.

ML was invited to return to the room.

AE gave brief feedback to ML and agreed to provide more detailed feedback after the meeting.

#### **4. SEF Update**

It was agreed to cover the SEF update at Item 8. Principal's Report.

### **Part 2:**

#### **5. Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

#### **6. Matters Arising**

AE had sent the good wishes of the governors to Geoff Turner. ML added that Geoff maintains contact with the school – he is on the distribution list for the newsletter and is helping to set up an award in memory of a recently deceased Old Alleynian.

AE had had a conversation with KB about governor absence at meetings and it was agreed to review the position at the end of the year. If there are any concerns these will be discussed with individuals.

Monitoring of Pupil Premium Funding is ongoing.

AE had discussed the presentation of the accounts with RT following the last meeting.

The plan of action for the NUT strike day, 26<sup>th</sup> March, had worked well and the school remained open. 18 staff went on strike. The governors asked Mark to convey their thanks to the senior team for keeping the school open.

KB had circulated the minutes of the January Trust meeting.

KB had not received any queries from governors regarding School Admissions.

No-one had expressed an interest in the role of Finance Link governor. Governors were asked again to contact KB if they would like to consider this role.

RT has been retained on a short term basis and is now dedicated to supporting the schools finance.

RP had been successful and he has secured Dominic Lieven, Cambridge University expert on 20<sup>th</sup> century history to take part in the school's First World War commemorative event to be held in November.

## **7. Finance Report**

### **i. Management Accounts**

Management Accounts to the end of March 2014 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. RT said the surplus at March is £34,000 more than budgeted. Income is higher than budget; the conversion funding from HCC was £27,000 more than anticipated.

The figures include a payment in respect of in year admissions to the Da Vinci School. Income from Pupil Led factors is lower but this has been offset by EFA Other Factors. RT said the funding formula is complicated. He would be happy to give time to explain it to governors but it would require at least 30 minutes. AE suggested it could be arranged after the new budget has been agreed.

RT explained variance in expenditure. This included reduced staff costs from unfilled vacancies and increased agency costs for sickness cover. Maintenance costs are above budget and this will continue to the year end. Emergency repairs were carried out to the roof and the insurers have requested a full electrical survey as a condition of insurance cover. Invoices for rates have been slow to be issued and no rate relief has been received to date. RT agreed to provide a reconciliation which gives a fuller explanation of the rates and rate relief. JE asked what the audit fee shown is. RT said this is an accrual and is for Wagstaffs, the auditors engaged by the Trust. KT asked what made up the non-educational supplies and services. RT said this is for items that do not fit into other categories; e.g., administration and catering. RT agreed to provide future budgets and account with a greater level of detail, showing more cost centres.

### **ii. Projected Out turn**

At the year end, 31 August, the income is predicted to be in line with the budget. Staff cost savings from the first half of the year will run through to the year end and the overspend on maintenance is not expected to increase. ML added that it had been a successful year for recruitment year as the school had a higher number of students for whom the funding would not be available until next year and this had put pressure on the budget. RT said that when constructing the budget he will start with the staffing structure. Changes to the pension scheme will immediately add to staffing costs – 3% on non-teaching staff and 2% on teaching staff. HC asked if the school would pick up a proportion of the Executive Principal costs. RT said yes and that all three schools' budgets would be constructed together to ensure affordability. RT asked governors to let him know what cost centre sub headings they would like in the 2014/2015 budget. The larger costs would be broken down into sub headings. RL

asked if the pension scheme is properly funded. RT said the Trust took the option to opt into an Academy pooling arrangement which helps to minimise risks to individual academies. AE said that the insurance premium had increased considerably this year and that ML had investigated the EFA insurance scheme for academies. The policy had been examined in detail and a saving of around £30,000 can be made for like for like cover. 30 June is the date for an expression of interest to the EFA. AE updated governors on the position of the Schools' Finance Manager. He explained that RT's job had two facets, part was focussed on NHC and its associated companies and part focussed on the Trust and schools. The schools' post had been offered to an individual but that person was made a better offer by their current employer and turned the position down. The post will be advertised again and in the meantime RT has been engaged part-time to focus solely on the schools' finances.

## **8. Principal's Report**

A report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The SEF Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and ML looked at this report first. Every judgement is now good. Achievement is tracking at 57% achieving 5 or more A\*-CEM. RL asked how it could be that only 1% of all students from Year 11 last year are NEET. JF said the figure is typically 3-4% and JE explained that this is the first year of the raising of the participation age. AB said that there could be a problem with the current Year 10 when it moves to Year 11. The small numbers mean that a few students could make a huge difference to the SEF next year. ML does not believe this will be a problem, because the class sizes are small and therefore a higher level of intervention can be put in place with individual students.

KT asked why Leadership is still at Grade 2. ML said this is because of further developments required in some areas of the Academy leadership structure.

Effectiveness of the Sixth Form: KT queried the grade 2 and Level of Achievement 'Good'. ML said that the school's legacy data prevents 'Outstanding'. Progression is also a problem.

The Kirkland Rowell survey will be an agenda item at the next meeting. ML agreed to look at the historic data.

ML thanked those governors who attended the y11 achievement awards.

ML then commented on the Principal's report:

**Attendance:** Attendance for the SEN students is at 94.9% which exceeds national average for all students. RL asked if the attendance figure is consistent across the year groups. ML replied that attendance Year 10 is less good and is distorted by the small number of students in the cohort. There is a small group with behaviour issues and some exclusions.

**Enrichment:** The cricket team has had two victories against Barnwell School. Four boys took first place at a recent athletics competition and this will feature in the next newsletter.

**Student Voice:** The ECO council is very active and a Year 7 group are working to improve the pond area.

**Staffing and Personnel:** A Head of foreign Languages has been appointed. The school is now advertising for an Attendance Officer instead of a Secretary to the Assistant Principal. The web advert for Assistant Principal has received 124 viewings.

Governors were informed of the TASA summer fair and invited to attend. It will take place on June 14<sup>th</sup> from 1-4pm at the school.

ML showed governors the new school tie and blazer which would be introduced in September 2014. The old stock will be sold at half price to older students.

**9. EFA Capital Grant**

AE reported that both of the bids submitted for capital grant has been successful. They are both fully funded which is a considerable achievement. The school has received a capital investment of almost £2 million in the last year. Mouchel will be project managing the roofing and window replacement project.

**10. Review of Policies**

A list of policies and review dates had been circulated in advance of the meeting. A number had not been reviewed recently and several are coming towards their review date. The accuracy of the data on the list was queried. JE said he had a copy of a previous list which he would forward to AE.

AE said it would make sense to have common policies across all 3 schools.

**11. Report back from Trust Meeting**

The minutes from the March Trust meeting will be circulated to governors. AE reported as follows: The risk register was discussed and is ongoing. Reports from the Chairs were received. A summary report from the Principals was given. The Renaissance document, (proposed new structure), was tabled and discussed. This would be presented at the governor conference on 9<sup>th</sup> July. The accounts were presented and the Financial Regulations were adopted. The property update focussed mainly on Letchworth and a presentation was made. A public consultation had taken place the night before. This was attended by approximately 70 people. The governor conference was confirmed for 9<sup>th</sup> July 2-7pm at the Goldsmith Centre.

**12. Governor Training**

The governor conference will take place on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2-7pm at the Goldsmith Centre, Letchworth.

The school's next Learning Walk will take place on 4<sup>th</sup> June from 8.30- 12.00. There will be a change to the format to allow governors to interview student focus groups. There is a HASG training event at Robertson House, Stevenage next week. JE will attend and AE requested that feedback from this event is given to ML.

Herts for Learning are holding a governors forum on 24<sup>th</sup> June which governors had been invited to attend. AE asked for feedback to be given to him.

AE said that he would continue to forward to KB details of relevant training events.

**13. Any Other Business**

The senior student team will be invited to attend the next meeting.

**Date and Time of Next Meeting:** 26<sup>th</sup> June at 6pm

Signed as an accurate record of the meeting

Chair's signature: .....

Date: .....