

THOMAS ALLEYNE ACADEMY

Minutes of the meeting of the Local Governing Body of the Academy
held on Thursday 13th November 2014 at the Thomas Alleyne Academy, High Street,
Stevenage commencing at 6:00 pm.

Governors present: Chair- Alan Euinton (AE), Vice-chair - Jonathan Ellam (JE),
Executive Principal - Mark Lewis (ML), Principal - Julia Flanagan (JF), Alan Browne (AB),
Howard Crompton (HC), Carol Hayman (CH), Eirwen Palmer (EP), Roger Luxton (RL),
Julia Cooke (JC), Dr Rod Pullen (RP), Lynsey Steadman (LS).

In attendance: Stuart Melbourne (SM), Tricia Phillipson (TP), Klaas Luchies (KL), Andrew
McLeod (AM), Kaylee Bonja (KB), Caroline Tyrwhitt (CT)

AE welcomed SM to the meeting. SM is the newly elected parent governor. TP attended
the meeting on behalf of North Herts College, in Keith Turner's absence. KL attended part
1 of the meeting only. AM attended part 2 of the meeting for the agenda item Finance only.
Introductions were made and AE welcomed SM to his new role. Sarah Carter had
resigned as parent governor and an election had been held. SM won the election and is
waiting for recruitment checks to be undertaken and completed. SM gave details of his
background.

AE confirmed that Trinity College had written to confirm RPs appointment as sponsor
governor for a further 2 years.

Caroline Tyrwhitt asked to attend the meeting as an observer to assist with her
professional development. This was agreed.

Part 1:

Action

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were accepted from Keith Turner.

2. Declarations of Interest

AE asked if there were any declarations of interest not already recorded.

None

AE welcomed KL to the meeting. KL had prepared a presentation to cover
agenda Items 3 and 5. The handout for the presentation was tabled. He
asked to begin with Item 5

5. Pupil Premium Update

KL informed governors that the audit of last year's pupil premium expenditure
will be available on the academy website within the next week.

Points raised included:

- The amount of pupil premium received has increased but the number of pupil premium students remains fairly constant – around one third of the academy roll
- A 'whole academy' approach continues. A proportion of costs are allocated from pupil premium. Expenditure is higher than the amount received from pupil premium
- Targeted intervention has been introduced for pupil premium students in Key Stage 3 (KS3)

Question: Is the academy comfortable with focussing most intervention at
Key Stage 4 (KS4) when research indicates that earlier intervention is more
successful?

Spending on KS4 and KS3 is roughly equal. Previously individualised intervention took place only at KS4. This has now been introduced at KS3. The audit report bears this out.

Question: Is there any evidence that the Kip McGrath provision is making a difference to achievement?

A base line assessment and a further assessment indicated that all students have made progress. Regular assessment will continue. The detail of analysis provided by the external provider is beneficial and would be very time consuming for academy staff to produce.

3. Progress 8 Overview

KL continued with his presentation. He gave a full and detailed explanation of how the new measure will operate.

Points raised included:

This is the new measure nationally for schools with effect from 2016. (September 2015)

A published Progress 8 score of 2.5 over all schools is the minimum accepted. Every school with a published Progress 8 score of -0.5 or below will trigger an Ofsted Inspection.

Schools may decide to opt in or opt out of using this measure for the current academic year. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had met to discuss the merits of this and recommend to the governors that the academy should opt out. Reasons include – not all subjects in each of the three categories are currently in the curriculum and the academy has a very small Year 11 cohort so the effect of one student's progress has a disproportionate effect on the academy's average score. The decision to opt in or opt out must be made by the end of this term. So far nationally only 14% of schools have decided to opt in.

Question: Does every student have the potential to make 3 levels of progress?

Generally yes, but students below level 2 on entry may not be able to achieve 3 levels of progress.

Question: History at the academy has shown that it is unwise to enter all students for English Literature when it is known they will only achieve a low grade so why set students up to fail?

Agreement that it is not sensible nor in the best interest of the students but the academy must make the best of what the government dictates.

Question: Who is responsible for taking the decision to opt in or opt out of the measure this year?

The SLT is recommending that the academy opts out.

Agreed - Action JF

There were no objections from the LGB to the recommendation

KL was thanked for his clear and detailed presentation.

4. SEF and Development Plan

i. Development Plan

The updated development plan had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The SLT had marked all the key action points red, amber or green. Action point 4.1 is marked red because it has not been started. The points marked amber are ongoing. Training for support staff across the Trust had taken place as twilight sessions. Links continue to form and develop across the Trust.

Points marked green indicate the target has been achieved.

Question: Why is point 4.5 marked green? What are the levels of engagement with the enrichment programme for year groups 9, 10 and 11? All year groups are able to participate in the enrichment programme but there is no focus to promote enrichment activities for year group 11 as the focus is on GCSEs.

Question: Is there further engagement with the Gold Assessment Sheets? Yes, but there needs to be some refinements, particularly for Year 7. Quality of feedback and response is being worked on. Once fully in place it will be regarded as outstanding practice. A new assessment framework will be brought to the next meeting.

Action JF

Question: When will the red point 4.1 be actioned? Consultation is taking place. It will be developed this academic year and implemented next year.

The development plan will be updated every half term and presented to the Local Governing Body

Action JF

ii. **SEF**

The academy self-evaluation 2014-2015 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. JF reported that some information is still being worked on.

Question: Is there an update on July 2014 leavers?

None of the leavers are NEET and an update on leavers will be provided at the next meeting.

Action JF

Question: Pupils' Achievement is suggested Grade 2, which cohort is this based on?

The grade is based on the attainment of the Year 11 cohort in 2014 and the tracked progress of the current Year 11 cohort.

Question: Does the suggested grade for pupils' achievement mean the academy is good?

Yes, but the areas of focus for improvement are identified at the end of the section, page 6.

Question: The current Year 11 cohort are tracking at a similar level to last year's so is a similar position expected for this year's exam results?

The cohort is much smaller. 53 students against 191 last year. A smaller cohort will inevitably lead to bigger fluctuations. The data is being collected. The deadline is tomorrow and the data will be collated by Tuesday/Wednesday of next week. The academy will then have a better idea.

The timing of the Local Governing Body meeting was questioned as governors would be unable to discuss the data until its next meeting in February 2015. It was suggested that future meetings should be scheduled to take place after the snapshot data has been collated.

The SEF will be updated and circulated to local governors by e-mail. The snapshot data will be circulated to governors in early December

Action JF

AM arrived. He was welcomed to the meeting and a short break was taken. KL was thanked and he left the meeting.

Part 2:

6. Minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2014

The minutes were agreed and signed by the chair of governors.

7. Matters Arising

Item 2: The annual eligibility declaration and register of members' interest forms had all been completed and received.

Item 5: The correction to the previous minutes had been made.

Item 6: Evaluation of the local governing bodies' performance had not been actioned as North Hertfordshire College had recently investigated a similar evaluation and the Trust is awaiting feedback. A measure of governing body effectiveness is now an expectation of Ofsted.

Question: How would an evaluation be carried out?

Typically through a questionnaire completed in confidence by each governor either after each meeting or once per term. The National Governors' Governor Mark was suggested as a start point.

Action ML/Clerk

Item 8.6 Details of the enrichment programme were available for the Open Evening and the full enrichment programme is available on the website. New clubs are being added. The Chair thanked governors who attended the Open Evening.

Item 8.10: There has been no further vandalism on the sports field

Item 9: RL had joined the Policy Review Group and it held its first meeting last week. 4 policies were reviewed and this item will be covered later in the meeting.

Item 12.iv The date of the Autumn Governor Conference has moved to 4th December. All governors have been informed.

8. Finance Report

i. **Management Accounts**

Management Accounts to 31 October 2014 were circulated in advance of the meeting. Points highlighted:

- Actual year to date surplus £53,608 and full year forecast surplus £138,405
- Insurance costs are deducted at source by EFA. EFA insurance gives a significant saving c. £15,000
- Agency staffing costs are over budget but this is more than compensated for by an underspend on teaching costs.
- Teaching costs are below budget for several reasons. The allocation of the Executive Principal's salary is shared equally between all three schools. There are also unfilled teaching post vacancies – 1 maths post and 1.6 science posts. 1 science post is not being covered. The posts covered by agency staff were staff on the upper pay spines so there is a cost saving from the agency staff employed on lower pay spines.

Question: Are the agency staff maintaining the required level of teaching? The agency teacher for maths is better than the previous teacher. They are contracted until December and then a decision on whether to offer a permanent post will be taken. Interviews for 2 science teaching posts will be held tomorrow.

Question: Is the Fund Account balance held within the Activities for Generating Funds line?

No. The Fund Account is not shown in the management accounts. It is kept separate and will only show when it is used for specific items. The amount held remains at £15,000.

Question: There is another fund held by County. What is that for?

It is for governors to decide how the fund is spent. In the past it had been used to fund prizes at prize giving evenings and for pupils who could not afford a trip. The fund has remained dormant for some time.

ML to investigate further and report at the next meeting.

Action ML

Question: Are software operating leases coming out of the IT budget and is there any budget for software held elsewhere?

IT is split between several headings which makes it difficult to calculate how much is available and how much has been spent.

Question: Is it a requirement to carry forward a surplus?

Nothing has been carried forward into this financial year. The surplus was capitalised and will be used for fitting out the Maltings.

Question: Is the academy's money being used on internal fittings in the Maltings?

The current works to make the building safe and watertight will be completed under budget. The sum remaining, an estimated £80,000, will pass to the academy. The cost to totally refurbish the building will be substantial so the surplus from last year will be used.

ii. **External Audit Feedback**

The auditors are finalising the accounts. A meeting is arranged for 28th November. There are no major problems. A few introductions to tighten procedures and processes have been made.

iii. **Financial Statement 2013/2014**

The accounts are in line with what has been previously reported.

Reporting is more regular. AM has monthly meetings in place with the academy principal. He is also working hard to ensure that the agreed financial regulations are adhered to.

AM was thanked and he left the meeting.

9. Principal's Report

A report was circulated in advance of the meeting. The following areas were highlighted:

- 5. Behaviour and Safety: There has been a slight dip in attendance and this is largely due to absences caused by a winter vomiting bug.
- 7. Staffing and Personnel: The training has been well received by staff. Interviews will take place for 2 science posts.
- 8. Property Update: For the next round of the Capital Improvement Fund the academy will apply for funding of refurbishment of toilets, new fire doors and a new alarm system. TASA are still fundraising to help with the cost of refurbishing the toilets, but there would not be enough raised to cover the entire project. HCC has arranged for the railings in front of the White House to be measured up for replacement. The current plan for the interior of the Maltings building will include a room for administration staff, a medical room, toilets, the Principal's office, finance office, a music and drama room, a caretaker's room and a music room. There are several options for the current Principal's office and the administration office. It may be more beneficial to locate reception in the Maltings. The target is for the building to be ready by September 2015.

Question: How will the academy ensure that any restrictions or conditions set by English Heritage are complied with?

A specialist team will be involved to ensure compliance.

- 10. Health & Safety: Two unplanned fire drills have taken place. The students responsible have been identified.

JF gave feedback on the event which took place on Remembrance Day at the academy. 2 assemblies were held for Years 9-13 which involved a representative from the British Legion. They also opened the remembrance garden. An exhibition was held in the conference centre which was open during the day and the evening. A production was held in the evening which included singing, dancing and poetry. It was a superb day, enjoyed by all and staff were extremely proud of the students.

10. Executive Principal's Report

ML gave a verbal report.

- He updated governors on the number of applications for Year 7 intake 2015/2016: The academy is in a good position with 141 1st choice applications against 132 last year.
- The partnership across the Trust continues to develop. Shared training has taken place and shared posts are working well – an exams officer and a curriculum co-ordinator.
- The Service Level Agreements are in place and regular reviews with service managers are taking place
- The DfE recently made a pre Ofsted visit to the Da Vinci Studio School of Creative Engineering. It was a very positive visit and the issues raised had been identified internally and are in the school's development plan. The class data packs were strongly praised which is an initiative governors have endorsed at Thomas Alleyne.

JF tabled a confidential report showing the staff appraisals for teachers and support staff. National standards were used and the report was in the format recommended by the DfE. The reports were returned to JF at the end of the item.

An update was requested for the next meeting.

Action JF

11. Policy Review Update

A list of policies and 4 draft policies were circulated in advance of the meeting. A revised policy calendar has been drafted and will be circulated

Action KB

The SLT will discuss the draft policies next week and the policies will go to the Trust for approval. A review date will then be added to the front covers. Governors were asked to e-mail comments on the draft policies to ML before the end of the month.

Action All

12. Governors in School Day Feedback

Unfortunately only one governor was able to attend this. It was decided to go ahead as the students were prepared for the visit. Time was spent looking at the work of a selection of Year 10 and Year 7 students and talking with them. Feedback on the Gold Assessment Sheets was that it needs to be simplified. Also feedback should be more personal and more information should be given on how students could do better.

Bullying in the academy appears to be minor – some name calling and pushing. All students spoken to were aware of the academy's statement on the control of bullying and knew what to do if they were bullied. No one felt bullied and all felt safe at the academy.

Gold Assessment Sheets- Subject areas which need improvement have been identified and further work on the standard and quality of feedback will take place. Some simplifications will take place for Year 7

Action: JF

13. Safeguarding Report

The annual safeguarding report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It is produced in the format required by the DfE.

Question: Are there any volunteers working in the academy?

One person in the library. JF to check that training has taken place. Section 4 – Policies will be updated

Action JF/LT

Question: Has the number of children looked after increased this year?

Yes

14. School Calendar

The academy calendar had been circulated in advance of the meeting. This was for information purposes only. Governors were informed that a Christmas production would not take place this year. The drama teacher is leaving at the end of November so the focus had been on the Remembrance Day production.

Governors were reminded that the TASA Winter Fair will take place on Saturday 6th December.

15. Risk Management

The strategic risk register for the Trust and the risk management policy had been approved at the Trust meeting. The academy risk register will be created and will come to the next meeting.

Action ML

Governors were asked if any risks had come to their attention. None

16. Any Other Business

- i. Timing of the issue of papers was questioned. The aim is to circulate papers 1 week before the meeting. It is not always possible to have all reports ready 1 week before a meeting. There is a danger that papers issued too far in advance of a meeting will be out of date.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: 15th January 2015 at 6pm

The Chair wished everyone a good Christmas and New Year and the meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed as an accurate record of the meeting

Chair's signature:

Date: