

# THE THOMAS ALLEYNE ACADEMY LOCAL GOVERNING BODY

A meeting of the local governing body for the Thomas Alleynes Academy was held in the Conference Room, the Thomas Alleynes Academy, Stevenage, on Thursday 2 February 2017, starting at 18.00.

## PRESENT

Jonathan Ellam (Chair)  
Julia Cooke  
Howard Crompton  
Carol Hayman  
Mark Lewis (Headteacher)

Roger Luxton  
Tara McGovern  
Stuart Melbourne  
Lynsey Steadman

## IN ATTENDANCE

Melanie Cook (Deputy Headteacher)

Robert Dale (Clerk)

## ITEM 1A: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Cliff Canning, Eirwen Palmer.

## ITEM 1B: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- None.

## MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- Agreed and signed as an accurate record of proceedings.

## MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

- Circulate Governor Visit templates with the minutes. **Action complete.** Template circulated and in use.
- Confirm arrangements for Governors in school day on 19 January 2017. **Action complete.** Report on Agenda.
- Governors to view the video using the link circulated by email. **Action Complete.** This was an easy to understand summary.
- Make HST Board and Audit Committee minutes available to members. **Action in hand.** To be implemented shortly.
- Arrange link meetings for the Spring Term. **Action complete.** Contacts had been made and dates (mostly) arranged.

## ITEM 2: DATA ANALYSIS

Mel Cook presented a report on performance at TAA covering developments since the start of the academic year. Better and more robust data about student progress and performance had been analysed to identify four key themes for school development:

- Reducing in-school variation in performance between Maths and English;

- Girls generally outperforming Boys in Maths and English (and most other subjects);
- The gap in performance between Pupil Premium and non-Pupil Premium students;
- Ensuring that more able students (those with high prior attainment) were getting enough challenge.

A detailed action plan showed the interventions planned to address these priorities:

- Reviewing schemes of work to ensure real challenge for all students (including the more able) from Y7. There were higher expectations now in the KS2 curriculum, and this needed more recognition at KS3.
- Enhanced monitoring of pupil progress and performance – using not just data but observations from learning walks and lessons – and applying analysis to effect changes for individuals and groups of students.
- Developing an aspirational and engaging curriculum, linked to the world of work so that students see the benefits of education. Examples of recent employer engagement included events with female role models, an Adecco activity for PP students, and a ‘Men at Work’ session.

Results from the current Y11 would be critical for those judging the school’s performance. However, it was difficult to form valid judgements ahead of actual results because changes in exams and the lack of information from exam boards about grade boundaries meant no school could forecast with confidence. At present, based on student performance in SATs (end of KS2) between 37% and 44% of the present cohort should get grade 5 and above in English and Maths. The current forecast based on mock exam results was for 28% to do so.

Data from performance in subjects other than Maths and English had also been analysed. This suggested a number of areas of potential concern – Biology, Physics, Core Science, Computer Science and Spanish. All heads of department had been provided with their subject level analysis and asked to consider:

- The successes, interventions that had worked for students, and key improvements;
- Areas of concern;
- Targets and next steps.

Y11 students would experience a mock ‘Results Day’ on Monday 6 February, with added support to manage stress. This was intended as a motivational activity. In addition, progress meetings with students would focus on what they could do to improve, meetings with curriculum leaders and staff briefings would identify targets and support for individual teachers (eg team teaching, joint planning, modelling of effective etc). Parental engagement and support for students over managing exam stress would also be provided.

**Question:** *Could an overall projection for Progress 8 be made?* In practice, this was very hard because of the floating median, which is based on the achievement of indicator grades. It was not possible at present to say whether the school might be judged to be ‘coasting’ – although if all TAA students achieved their indicator grades, the school was likely to be judged to be better performing.

**Question:** *Was the gender gap in performance evident across all year groups and subjects?* It was present in all year groups, but not in all subjects. But girls were outperforming boys in most subjects including English and Maths.

**Question:** *Were there different ways of approaching learning for the genders which might stimulate better performance in boys?* Boys tended to find practical learning better, while girls tended to prefer coursework to exams. Some of the school's interventions were delivered in single sex groups.

**Question:** *How does the school target and raise aspirations in the more able?* Each teacher had class level performance data which would permit them to identify those who, on paper, were potentially capable of higher achievement. Teachers who had a clear understanding of the adjacent key stages – especially those coming next – were better placed to encourage the more able. The fact that the school was now recruiting a larger number of more able students needed to be reflected in teacher planning, from Y7 onwards.

**Question:** *Why was science, as a faculty, underperforming?* Core science and Additional science tended to see lower results as the more able cohort opted for triple science. Physics was an area where specialist staff were in short supply. However, the team's action plan to address poor performance appeared the most coherent and well-considered in the school; there was optimism about the prospect for improvement.

**Question:** *How comparable were current projections with those of previous years?* This data was more soundly based and rigorously challenged, and more consistent definitions were used; it would be hard to make a fair comparison with past years.

**Question:** *How many staff were current exam markers?* Experience of exam marking was extremely valuable and a number of staff across many subjects were markers. The number would be checked and reported back.

Governors welcomed the thorough presentation and enhanced approach to data handling and analysis.

**Action:** Confirm the number of exam markers on the staff.

### **ITEM 3: PUPIL PREMIUM**

Klaas Luchies had been intending to present this report, but his son was graduating (in Holland) and gave his apologies.

The paper helped governors fulfil their obligation to be aware of the value of Pupil Premium (PP) funding received by the school, to know how it was spent and to consider the value for money, including the difference interventions made. This was especially important if there were differences in outcomes between students not qualifying for PP and those that did. The value of funding received in 2016/17 was £210,000, up from £178,000 in 2015/16.

**Question:** *How could the LGB assess value for money?* Each intervention had outcome measures, and could be linked with individual students. Some used the relevant proportion of costs attributable to PP students - for example of an attendance officer. Statistically, higher levels of attendance were associated with higher student outcomes, so it was reasonable to use this measure to support a value for money judgement. Similarly, work-readiness encouraged performance and the recent Adecco workshop – aimed exclusively at PP students – should contribute, while a breakfast club for Y11 PP students encouraged revision. PP students were given priority for interventions relevant to their individual needs.

**Question:** *Was the performance gap closing below Y11?* Yes, data analysis suggested that it was. The team was also interested in the approach taken by the Nobel school to identify and develop Y7 students lacking maturity or softer skills to assist their integration and study.

**Question:** *What was the national average for PP students?* In 2014/15, it had been 27.5%.

#### **ITEM 4: PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The financial position remained very tight, although there had been some savings on agency supply this year reflecting lower staff sickness absence. Next year's budget was more challenging as the number of pupils rose ahead of funding to support them. At present, a deficit was projected, but more work would be done before finalising the position.

Two staff were currently being performance managed. Student attendance was better than at the equivalent time in 2016, but had fallen after Christmas because of sickness absence.

Governors congratulated the Head teacher and team for dealing with the current performance challenges at the same time as handling a very difficult financial position.

#### **ITEM 5: RISK REGISTER**

Governors reviewed the register, endorsed risk assessments and identified mitigating actions. The Academy Order in respect of Roebuck Primary School contributed to mitigating the risk related to Trust growth.

#### **ITEM 6: GOVERNORS IN SCHOOL DAY**

The Chair had been disappointed that only two governors had been available for the January date and although a useful visit had been conducted and reported on, he encouraged colleagues to make themselves available if at all possible. The next such day was Monday 13 March and would concentrate on stretch and challenge for the more able, particularly Y7. The January visit, which had focussed on the implementation of the behaviour policy, gave rise to a number of observations:

- A generally respectful and positive atmosphere had been evident; there had been evidence of good student support for the behaviour policy.
- Lessons had been engaging and had not missed chances to promote the policy aims.
- Learning journals showed a decline in the standard of completion over time, with reflections on the Being Safe and Showing Respect seeming the hardest to complete.
- Where tutors were regularly looking at learning journals, the standard tended to be higher. There was inconsistency in parental reviews and some students were not reflecting appropriately, finding the format of the planner unhelpful.
- There had been good opportunities to speak with students, and their feedback tended to focus on the negative impact of individual misbehaviour. Were all teachers following the three stage process before going to on-call?

In response, some actions had been agreed:

- Planners would be restructured for the next academic year to better support the reflective feedback process.
- Good practice would continue to be shared with teachers and with students via year group assemblies.
- The home learning policy (of which the reflective journals formed part) was being revised with the aim of relaunching in September.

Governors endorsed the response.

## **ITEM 7: POLICY REVIEW – SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION**

The Policy had been revised to include an extra clause relating to LGBT relationships and to update job titles and house style. Governors endorsed the revised policy for use by TAA and noted that it should be reviewed again at the start of 2019.

In future, policies which were substantially revised would be presented to Governors with the changes visible to aid review.

**Action:** Place the updated policy on the TAA website.

## **ITEM 8: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

E-safety

- E-safety training was planned; consideration would be given to inviting staff, governors and parents to participate.

## **ITEM 9: DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- The next meeting would take place on Thursday 30 March 2017, starting at 18.00.

The meeting closed at 19.40.

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Signed – Chair of Governors

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Date

## **LOCAL GOVERNING BODY ACTION LOG**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Who/when</b>
02/02/17	1d.	Make HST Board and Audit Committee minutes available to members	Robert Dale 10/02/17
02/02/17	2.	Confirm the number of exam markers on the staff.	Mark Lewis 28/02/17
02/02/17	7.	Place the updated policy on the TAA website.	Robert Dale 10/02/17