

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 25 January 2018, starting at 18.00.

PRESENT

Jonathan Ellam (Chair)
Julia Cooke
David Gray
Mark Lewis (Headteacher)
Tara McGovern

Stuart Melbourne
Claire Smeeton
Lynsey Steadman
Duncan Visser
Jenny White

IN ATTENDANCE

Melanie Cook (Deputy Headteacher)
Klaas Luchies (Assistant Headteacher)

Robert Dale (Clerk)

ITEM 1A: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Howard Crompton, Roger Luxton and Kirsty Ross.

ITEM 1B: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- None.

ITEM 1C: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- Agreed and signed as an accurate record of proceedings.

ITEM 1D: MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

Actions had been followed-up as indicated below:

- Agree a date and time for a governor in school session to review the evidence supporting the latest version of the SEF. **Action complete.** Report included on agenda at Item 4.
- Provide David Gray with a list of relevant school policies. **Action under way.** Statutory policies are all in place and being reviewed appropriately including a Child Protection policy. Although issues related to Safeguarding and Anti-bullying are picked up in this policy, it has been agreed to put in place additional policies based on existing model policies. These would be sent to governors for approval by circulation.
- Hertfordshire County Council was reviewing its online safety policy, but there might be a charge for academy schools to access templates.
- Add Progress 8 Briefing to January agenda. **Action complete.** See Item 2.

ITEM 2: LINK GOVERNOR REPORT - OUTCOMES

- Klaas Luchies briefed governors about Progress 8 and other measures of progress and attainment, and explained how the school was performing. Actions to address gaps and weaknesses were also covered.
- As the name suggested, Progress 8 measured pupil progress across a range of subjects and aimed to show value added by the school from Key Stage 2. A separate Attainment 8 measure reported the average points score across the same group of subjects. There were four 'buckets' within this group: English, Maths, EBACC subjects (science, humanities, languages) and Open (other subjects including PE, Art etc). Maths and English have double weighting and at least one subject must come from each of the other 'buckets' to make up the eight. Students can study more than the minimum number of subjects; the higher of their grades count towards the score.
- For TAA, the Attainment 8 measure was good, but the Progress 8 measure was below the national average. This suggested that students at the school were making less progress, on average, than students with similar KS2 scores nationally.
- The group of subjects included 'reformed' GCSEs graded 1-9 and 'non-reformed' GCSEs graded A* - F. The last 'non-reformed' GCSEs would be phased out in 2018/19. 'Non-reformed' GCSE grades were mapped against the new 1-9 grading so that both could be reported consistently within Progress and Attainment 8 measures.
- Government gives estimated Attainment 8 outcome data based on KS2 data and historic performance information but this only becomes available after final results data is published in the January after the summer in which examinations were taken. There is always a small shift in outcomes each year as schools appeal exam results.
- Progress 8 data is difficult to forecast as it is a relative measure, based on national average performance, which changes year-on-year. Some schools (not TAA) also engage in what Ofsted calls 'gaming' by entering students for programmes such as the European Computer Driving Licence seen as relatively easy to achieve.
- TAA students are given an Indicator Grade based on attainment forecasts intended to be a minimum and not a target grade. If all students hit their indicator grades, then the Progress 8 score should be zero, because students will have made as much progress as expected based on their KS2 performance. TAA students on average take nine GCSE subjects, so should in most cases 'fill' each of the Progress 8 buckets – although there is a restricted choice in the EBACC element.
- Schools that deliver consistently lower than average progress for students are at risk of being classed as 'coasting'. Nationally, around 10% of secondary schools are in this group and one in eight schools are currently showing progress below the floor level. Governors should be aware of the criteria for a coasting judgement and question the headteacher about plans to improve progress.
- Governors were briefed on new information documents, including the latest Ofsted Inspection Data Summary Report. This analysed information about schools and identified key areas for governors to investigate. This report replaces Raise online.
- For TAA, key questions for governors included investigating whether the improvement in Progress 8 data was happening fast enough, what could be done to enhance Progress 8 performance for disadvantaged students. In addition, although progress of average attainers was in line with expectations, both the high and low prior attainers

made less progress than expected. Finally, progress in English and subjects in the Open Progress 8 bucket was slower than average.

Question: *Governors asked what was being done to enhance student progress and how was it measured?* Mock results from December 2017 were available. They showed a cohort which was better placed than at the equivalent period in the previous year. However, both Pupil Premium (PP) students and subjects in the Open bucket showed less progress than expected. There was still work to do.

- Actions were being taken at subject and student level. There was increased emphasis on PP students – ‘Pupil Premium First’ being the point teachers were asked to consider. This had been apparent during the recent governor visit.
- ISDR information had been shared with middle leaders so that they were aware of how they could all contribute. The school had joined PIXL (cost c£2.5k) which gave access to strategies, support and resources, including test exam papers.
- The school was also considering introducing a Microsoft qualification at L2, widely-recognised by employers. A group of students had been identified as potentially benefitting who would undertake the programme during the Easter break, without cutting into their other study or revision time. There will be a cost (c£15k) additional to the agreed budget, but this could be managed. Governors approved the proposal.

Question: *What would happen if other parents asked for their child to be included?* Students had to pass a skills test before being accepted. If more students were involved, the cost increased. Governors recalled that c10 students with high prior attainment had been offered a General Studies AS programme which would also add to the Open ‘bucket’.

Question: *Could the school get to a -0.2 Progress 8 score this year?* The team would be satisfied with this ambitious goal. There was reasonable confidence that the outcome would be c-0.25; this would be helped by encouraging high prior attainers to aim for higher grades.

Question: *How was the school helping students whose home environment was not conducive to study?* A controlled study area was available from half term. Show My Homework gave information to parents on intervention lessons to encourage participation.

Question: *What were arrangements for study leave?* Teaching would continue for as long as possible and the exam timetable left little time for study leave until after the May half term.

- Governors noted excellent attendance at parents evening (97%) and were pleased that this helped encourage student aspiration.
- Governors thanked Klaas Luchies for a clear and valuable presentation. The Y11 strategy document was excellent and understandable. Governors congratulated students and staff on a creditable performance during mock exams and hoped that this would improve further when the real thing came along.

ITEM 3: PERFORMANCE REPORT

- The head teacher reported on progress and performance, noting that, regrettably, it had been necessary to exclude permanently two Year 10 students. Governors were thanked for their participation in the disciplinary committee meetings.
- Since then, there had been further incidents involving a Y10 girl, and a Y7 boy. As previously been reported, the school had been put under pressure to take students in-year and two of those permanently excluded had been students about whom concerns

had been raised with the local authority before admission. The increase in permanent exclusions was not indicative of a wider level of poor behaviour.

- Governors agreed; the students had all behaved exceptionally well during the evacuation (caused by a student setting off the alarm) despite the appalling weather.
- One member of staff had recently been diagnosed with a serious medical condition and was undergoing tests in respect of treatment.

Question: *Was the VAT refund mentioned included in the budget?* Yes. Payment was being chased to manage cashflow.

Question: *What was the position in respect of a potential conversion by Barnwell?* Discussions were ongoing. The position would be kept under review in the light of performance and inspection data as it became available. We are not expecting any conversion to take place this academic year.

Question: *How was the new arrangement in respect of the attendance officer working out?* The position had been taken over by the Pastoral secretary, who was giving support to Devon and who had made an excellent start. This helped co-ordinate student support.

Question: *Was a separate Safeguarding agenda item needed at each meeting?* Governors agreed that the head teacher's performance report was the right place to report on safeguarding and matters related to keeping children safe in education. This would reinforce the point that safeguarding was part of the school's culture and not something separate.

Question: *What impact had the news of the conviction of the former head of the Da Vinci School for Science and Engineering had on staff and parents at TAA?* The local press reports had generated a few questions, primarily from sixth form students. It was recognised that the conviction did not relate to any contact with children at the school, or to any use of school computer equipment, and that recruitment and safeguarding processes had been properly followed. Staff formerly at the school and now at TAA had been supported and were not aware of any gossip about the matter.

ITEM 4: GOVERNORS IN SCHOOL DAY REPORT

- The recent governors in school day had been very well attended. Governors commented that the vision and ethos presented at LGB meetings was clearly evident across the school. Development plans were clear and well-used, and the focus on Pupil Premium students was apparent in all subjects. High achievers were also recognised and differentiation provided.
- The new home learning arrangements were generally popular and the online system was consistently used. There was a good level of awareness from staff and students about safeguarding, including an understanding of indicators of concern. Staff were knowledgeable and passionate about their subjects. Overall, the impression was of a thoroughly joined-up approach to delivering good student outcomes.
- Middle leaders had appreciated the engagement from governors.
- The next scheduled day would have a focus on safeguarding including reviewing the recruitment processes, a site walk to assess health and safety, including a discussion with students about where on site they might or might not feel safe and consideration of the induction process and other training matters.

Action: Finalise programme for next Governors in school day.

ITEM 5: OFSTED BRIEFING

- The recent briefing had highlighted that governors should be able to demonstrate to an inspector that they knew that students were safe at school. There was merit in putting more emphasis on safeguarding matters throughout the year and inspectors were considering a school's culture, not just its processes; encouraging awareness and engagement with safeguarding matters would be very important.
- Some participants would have preferred a more interactive session, and more recognition that not all those attending were teachers. The event had been billed as a briefing session; a school training event should be arranged.

Action: Seek to arrange an in-school governor training event on safeguarding.

ITEM 6: REVIEW OF POLICIES

- The paper presented a revised policy addressing the needs of students with medical conditions and highlighted the revisions, which were in line with current guidance. Governors approved the updated policy for the school's use.

Action: Add the revised policy to the school website.

ITEM 7: ADMISSIONS CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

- Governors discussed the feedback received from local stakeholders. There had been five responses, four of which were negative. The issues raised related to the risk that local children living in the Old Town area would not get places when children living on the other side of Stevenage would.
- **Governors agreed** that the proposal should be submitted to the Trust Board.

Action: Seek agreement from the Trust Board for the change of admission criteria.

ITEM 8: RISK REGISTER

- The latest register would be circulated to members for their consideration.

ITEM 9: TRUST BOARD FEEDBACK

- The Board met in December and would meet again on 7 February. Issues covered at the last meeting included the allocation and impact of pupil premium funding at TAA, Safeguarding, performance, teaching and learning and the risk register.
- The Trust would review its strategic direction given the reduced drive for academisation evident from government at present.

ITEM 10: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governor Award

- A presentation and cheque for £100 was made at the end of term assembly in December to a Y12 student, Vita Dovydova.
- Devon Woolley and the student parliament were considering the next round of bids to Governor Funds which would be considered later this term. Governors would be invited to be part of the assessment panel.

Governor Space

- This was a new training offer for which we had registered. Contact from the provider was awaited. Governors were keen to pursue training, which might include in-house 'cluster' sessions as well as individual courses on subjects of interest to particular governors. The link to HfL training would be recirculated to governors. Individuals would need to know their governor number to book.

Action: Re-send the link to HfL training to all governors.

International Link

- There was a historic link between Stevenage and Kadoma, Zimbabwe; Following meetings with Stevenage Kadoma Association led by Mel Cook, Jackie Humberstone (Head of RE) was leading a project to develop a link with a school there. Governors wondered whether there might be scope to develop things such as 'gap year' placements for sixth form students.

Engineering success

- A Year 8 student had been successful in a University of Hertfordshire engineering challenge. Governors congratulated the student on their success.

ITEM 11: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Thursday 15 March 2018, starting at 18.00.

The meeting closed at 19.45.

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Signed – Chair of Governors

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Date

LOCAL GOVERNING BODY ACTION LOG

Meeting	Item	What	Who	When
25/01/18	4.	Finalise programme for next Governors in school day.	Mark Lewis	02/03/18
25/01/18	5.	Seek to arrange an in-school governor training event on safeguarding.	Robert Dale	02/03/18
25/01/18	6.	Add the revised policy to the school website.	Robert Dale	16/02/18
25/01/18	7.	Seek agreement from the Trust Board for the change of admission criteria.	Mark Lewis	07/02/18
25/01/18	10.	Re-send the link to HfL training to all governors.	Robert Dale	16/02/18