



## THOMAS ALLEYNE ACADEMY

Minutes of the meeting of the Local Governing Body of the Academy held on Thursday 28 January 2016 at the Thomas Alleynes Academy, High Street, Stevenage, starting at 18.00.

### PRESENT

#### Governors

Alan Euinton (Chair) – AE	Carol Hayman (Staff Governor) – CH
Jonathan Ellam (Vice-Chair) – JE	Mark Lewis (Managing Director) – ML
Dame Pat Collarbone – PC	Stuart Melbourne – SM
Julia Cooke – JC	Eirwen Palmer – EP
Howard Crompton (Local Governor)	Dr Rod Pullen – RP
Julia Flanagan (Principal) – JF	Lynsey Steadman – LS

#### In Attendance

Robert Dale (Clerk) – RD	Andrew McLeod (Item 7). – AMc. Left meeting at 18.24
--------------------------	--

### ACTIONS SUMMARY

Item	Action	Person Responsible	Deadline
7.12	Raise question over banking guarantees with Finance Director.	Mark Lewis	31 March 2016
3.16	Identify possible dates for 'Governors in school' day.	Julia Flanagan	19 February 2016
6.20	Carry out Governor Skills Audit.	Robert Dale	31 March 2016
6.20	Circulate Policy Review calendar.	Mark Lewis	26 February 2016
6.20	Raise a question about business continuity planning with the Hart Schools Trust (HST).	Alan Euinton/Jonathan Ellam	31 March 2016
8.21	Circulate updated performance data and analysis.	Julia Flanagan	26 February 2016
8.28	Circulate update on destinations data from Connexions.	Julia Flanagan	31 March 2016
10.32	Prepare paper on proposed application of TAA charitable funds.	Jonathan Ellam/Howard Crompton	31 March 2016

### ACTION

#### ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. None.

#### ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. None.

#### ITEM 7: FINANCE REPORT

##### 2014/15 Year-end

3. AMc summarised the year-end position taken from the management accounts and commented on the 2014/15 Audit Report. The school had generated a small operating surplus (c£12,500) in 2014/15, and detailed analysis showed how this had been achieved.

Consolidated accounts had been seen by the Audit Committee and the HST Board and sent to the Education Funding Agency (EFA). There were no compliance issues.

4. Recommendations from the auditors had largely been accepted; the asset register was up-to-date and being maintained; there was greater visibility of Pupil Premium income and expenditure so that it was clear how it had been spent; tender reports showed that the school was getting value for money in procurement. A recommendation about treatment of capital grant money each year was not accepted because it could have distorted (inflated) year-end figures. Instead, the point was covered in a Note to the Accounts. The auditors had been complimentary about the school's preparedness for the annual audit and its financial accounting generally. Their recommendations encouraged the team to consider wider issues.

5. **Question** - How could governors be confident that the capital asset register was properly maintained? *Recent capital had mainly been for building work. Management recognised the importance of ensuring that spend on IT assets was properly recorded. The auditors were satisfied with the position. Depreciated items were up to date.*

6. **Question** – Why was it better to include information about capital grants as a note rather than on the face of the accounts? *Including the full capital grant in year 1, when expenditure would take place over more than one year, would give a misleading impression of the year-end surplus.*

7. **Question** – could the governing body expect to receive a similar level of detailed financial information in future? *Yes, that was the intention, although the governing body's role was expected to focus on teaching and learning rather than financial management, which was the role of the HST Board.*

#### **2015/16 Forecast**

8. Governors reviewed the year-to-date position and the latest forecast. There had been a higher than expected level of sickness absence among staff (and students); supply costs were higher. There were some changes in the income line, as pupil premium funding had been reduced and support for the summer school cut, but some extra Y7 funding might be received. Overall, there was a forecast fall of c£17,000. Extra curriculum resources would be needed for new GCSEs, which would have some impact in the current financial year. The school still expected to show a surplus in 2015/16.

9. **Question** – Would the summer school be running in 2016? *Yes, although students would be selected for attendance and staff costs would be reduced – provision would be matched to what was affordable.*

10. **Question** – Why were support staff costs higher than forecast? *This reflected a forecasting error associated with the transfer of responsibility for estates staff from the school to college. The actual was a true reflection of spending in this area.*

11. **Question** – Should the level of cover insurance be reviewed? *As most absences had been short-term (one or two days), extra insurance cover would not have helped.*

12. **Question** – Was there any banking risk to school funds? *This was a matter that North Hertfordshire College would be considering more widely and the point would be raised with the new Finance Director.*

### Lettings Report

13. Regular Lettings would only be permitted within Academy opening hours to minimise the impact on costs. Income and costs associated with each letting had been identified and there was a contribution overall.

### ITEM 3: ASSESSMENT WITHOUT LEVELS = UPDATE

14. Examples of the new reporting 'snapshot' were provided; GCSE students identified their own targets in discussion with staff and based on feedback from the Gold sheets. Student targets were being monitored by staff to check quality.

15. Work on assessment at KS3 continued including whole-school review and moderation to ensure there was consistency, stretch and challenge. Maths and English teams were modifying schemes of work to minimise repetition in Y7. There was growing confidence among the staff of their ability to use assessment processes to identify the skills needed for progression.

16. Governors agree to defer the 'Governors in School' day until after half-term – potential dates would be shared by circulation. The focus should be on assessment, with governors encouraged to speak to student and look at the quality of feedback. JF/ML

### ITEM 4: PUPIL PREMIUM REPORT

17. Governors reviewed a list of the different interventions support by pupil premium funding, including the cost and success criteria for each.

18. *Question – Was it possible to identify the impact of individual interventions? It was not easy to compare the value for money of different programmes only to show that programmes overall had made a difference to individuals who might be benefiting from several. Reporting the actual cost to the school of providing Free School Meals was intended to enhance transparency; feedback from pupils on the quality of food provided was good and efforts were made to influence food choice positively.*

### ITEM 5: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2015

19. These were agreed to be an accurate record of proceedings and signed accordingly.

### ITEM 6: MATTERS ARISING

20. Updates were provided as follows:

- 3.8: Governor Visits - As discussed at paragraph 15 above.
- 5.11: Governor Skills Audit – to be followed up once the new Clerk was in post. RD  
Governors were asked to inform RD if they were undertaking training.
- 5.12: Policy Review calendar – an update would be circulated by ML. ML
- 5.13: Financial Report to Governing Body – the issue had been raised with the Hart Schools Trust Board and a greater level of detail would be provided in future.
- 6.18: Vice Chair appointment – action complete.
- 7.19: Notes from Quality Walks – had been circulated.
- 7.20: Financial information - agreed (see 5.13 above).
- 10.34: TAA charitable funds - on the agenda at Item 10.
- 12.38: Business Continuity Planning - to be raised at a future HST Board meeting. AE/JE
- 

### ITEM 8: PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

21. Performance data based on recent assessments and mock examinations was being analysed and would be circulated before the next meeting. A range of interventions JF

was outlined including Y12 students mentoring Y11s. Connexions advisers had been into school to discuss student aspirations and to offer guidance on direction. Attainment on entry for the current Y11 cohort had been below the national average.

22. The performance of two staff was giving concern and appropriate interventions were in place. Three staff were on an 'excellent teacher' programme and a strong internal teaching and learning support group was developing.

23. There had been 23 applications for the Vice-Principal role, with interviews to take place on 3 February 2016. There had been strong local interest - a very positive indicator of an improving reputation.

24. Governors discussed the potential to acquire the White House. They were disappointed that the initial offer had been rejected by the County Council, but recognised the financial risk a purchase represented given the cost of refurbishment.

25. The 2015/16 Self-Evaluation Report had been updated and had been invaluable in informing a discussion with the Regional Schools Commissioner. There was strong evidence of progress and improvement.

26. Governors reviewed a comprehensive planning sheet showing the range of activities, when actions were being taken and who was accountable. It was pleasing to see the breadth of staff training being delivered. Helen Russell was invited to attend the next meeting to report further.

27. Question: How close were links with local employers? *This was a continuing area for development and more business links were planned.*

28. Question: What destination data did the school have – about outcomes other than university entrance? *A report from Connexions had been shared with governors. More information would be published in March and would be circulated to governors.* JF

#### **ITEM 9: TRUST REPORT**

29. Governors were briefed on changes to leadership and management resulting from the resignations of Julia Flanagan at TAA and Karen Barker (Da Vinci Studio school for Creative Enterprise). The latter would be leaving at Easter for a role in London as Principal of a University Technical College (UTC) and her current deputy would be Acting Principal at least until August. The Hart Schools Trust (HST) was considering arrangements for delivering a strong creative enterprise curriculum thereafter.

30. Recruitment for a Vice-Principal to start at TAA in September 2016 was under way; Governor support for the interview process was very much appreciated, although it was understood that not everyone could attend on the day.

31. There were vacancies on the Governing Body and the HST Board; now that the new Clerk was in post, these would be addressed. Alan Euinton had advised the HST Board that he intended to step down from the governing body at the end of the academic year and from his role on the HST Board and Audit Committee. Jonathan Ellam had been asked to consider taking on the Chair of the governing body; this would be put to the HST Board at their next meeting.

**ITEM 10: THOMAS ALLEYNE TRUST FUND**

32. The HST had accepted the LGB's recommendation that the spending of the Trust funds should be directed by the school, and signatories would be Jonathan Ellam (proposed incoming chair) and Mark Lewis (incoming Principal). No expenditure would be committed without consulting the governing body. A paper would be submitted to the next meeting on the historical background to the trusts and a proposed approach to investing them in the school. JE/HC

**ITEM 11: POLICIES UPDATE**

33. Agreed.

**ITEM 12: RISK MANAGEMENT**

34. The risk register had been updated but there were no material changes to report. Governors noted that a temporary reduction in the PAN had been agreed to minimise the risk of further in-year admissions.

**ITEM 13: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

35. Governors thanked Lynsey Steadman for arranging an excellent year 7 feedback afternoon.. Those involved seemed enthusiastic and positive about TAA

**ITEM 14: DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

36. The next meeting would be held on Thursday 27 April 2016 starting at 18.00.

Signed as an accurate record of the meeting

Chair's signature: .....

Date: .....