

THE THOMAS ALLEYNE ACADEMY LOCAL GOVERNING BODY

A meeting of the local governing body for the Thomas Alleyne Academy was held in the Conference Room, the Thomas Alleyne Academy, Stevenage, on Wednesday 27 April 2016, starting at 18.00.

PRESENT

Alan Euinton (Chair)
Pat Collarbone
Julia Cooke
Howard Crompton
Jonathan Ellam (Vice chair)

Julia Flanagan (Retiring Principal)
Carol Hayman
Mark Lewis (Headteacher)
Eirwen Palmer
Lynsey Steadman

IN ATTENDANCE

Joanne Balharrie (Senior Student) Item 2
Myles Catley (Head Boy) Item 2

Helen Russell (Item 5)
Robert Dale (Clerk)

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Myles Catley and Joanne Balharrie, representing the Student Parliament, to the meeting. He proposed to take Item 2 early to allow the students to get away promptly.

ITEM 2: STUDENT PARLIAMENT REPORT

The Student Parliament was meeting every half term with representatives from all years and considering issues in five areas: Teaching and Learning, Behaviour for Learning, the Community, Trips and Activities and the School Environment. The paper circulated outlined actions and suggestions being considered in each of these areas.

Governors commended this work and gave advice that:

- There were precedents for schools 'adopting' an underpass; the right approach to the local authority might allay concerns from historic experiences. Alternatively, the suggestion for using demountable boards was a good one.
- Students should where possible accompany the Head and/or governors on periodic walks to look at the school environment.
- Student Parliament representatives should work with the staff group reviewing the current Behaviour Policy.
- A video showcase for school clubs, trips and activities would be excellent material for the Y6 day in July.
- Encouragement to students to participate in sessions on public speaking and debate boosted confidence.

The Chair thanked Myles and Joanne for presenting a report on very exciting developments for the school. Governors were delighted to hear that there was a good level of student engagement across all year groups, and that the senior students and Parliament was looking outwards to the community as well as at the school itself.

ITEM 1A: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Stuart Melbourne and Rod Pullen.

ITEM 1B: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- Agreed, subject to amending the final bullet point to read “Wednesday 27 April”, and signed as an accurate record of proceedings.

MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

Actions agreed at the last meeting had been completed or were being followed up.

- **Banking arrangements:** the new Finance Director (FD) was reviewing banking across the Group, and would consider deposit guarantees within this.
- **Governors in school day:** this had been a positive event, when governors had visited a number of classes and seen much good practice, including effective marking in books and improved displays.
- **Governor Skills Audit:** this would be conducted during May and June.
- **Policy Review Calendar:** two policies were on the agenda for review.
- **Business Continuity Planning:** the new FD would follow this up.
- **Performance data:** was covered in the Headteacher’s report.
- **Destinations data:** the latest data showed that no leavers were “Not in Education, Employment or Training” (NEET); this was good evidence that the school was preparing students well for the future.
- **Governor Funds:** a paper was on the agenda.

ITEM 5: CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) OPPORTUNITIES

Helen Russell briefed Governors on the school’s approach to training and developing staff, which was integrated with appraisal targets set at the start of each school year.

The presentation covered the school’s approach to performance target setting, the training budget and how it was delivered during the year on a whole-school, team and individual basis, how the impact of training was assessed, and plans for the next academic year. Governors asked the following questions:

Question: Was the teaching and learning measure equivalent to the previous ‘Good or Outstanding lessons’ measure?

- Yes, though it looked at this through the perspective of enabling students to make expected or better progress.

Question: Was participation high, or were a few staff doing a lot of training?

- Most staff engaged in some training or development activities – though NQTs and Schools Direct trainees received the greatest level of support.

The next area for development was training for support staff; this was harder to deliver as the roles were highly individualised. There were strong indications of a desire for training and development from these colleagues and this would be worked on.

Governors thanked Helen for an excellent presentation which showed how much enthusiasm there was among the staff for training and professional development.

ITEM 8: TRUST UPDATE

The Chair reported on the meeting of the Hart Schools Trust held on 16 March 2016. Discussions had covered the plans for closure of the Da Vinci schools, proposed heads of terms for a lease of the White House adjacent to TAA, the Audit Committee's activity, the current Risk Register, and plans for expansion of the Trust.

ITEM 3: LEASE ARRANGEMENTS NO 1 HIGH STREET (THE WHITE HOUSE)

Heads of Terms for a 122 year lease costing £20,000 had been agreed in principle by the Trust. Although the building needed extensive renovation work, its location – effectively within the school boundary – meant that integrating it with the school estate (as had historically been the position) was desirable from a safeguarding perspective. The only immediate obligation on the school would be to decorate the property externally – which would help the school's reputation locally as the property was effectively the outward face of the premises onto the High Street.

The intention was that once the lease had been agreed, the garden would be opened up as a post-16/sixth form area. In the longer term, several potential uses for the building could be considered but would be reliant on the ability to secure capital funding. Creative ideas from Governors were very welcome.

ITEM 4: HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

Mark Lewis presented this report. Governors asked the following questions:

Question: Given the cost of Agency staff needed to cover sickness absence, was there any merit in reconsidering the level of insurance cover purchased?

- This would not have helped this year, as most sickness absence was short term only. Where the quality of supply staff had been unacceptable, the individual was sent off site and costs reclaimed from the agency.

Question: what was the nature of the electrical work needed?

- Some safety concerns had been identified by a recent review; earthing arrangements for some buildings were not up to current standards. Governors agreed that this be remedied urgently, there was a potential risk to students and staff and to the school's insurance cover. The NHC Estates team had verified the findings of the review and confirmed that the fault existed.
- Governors also agreed that a procurement waiver could be applied in this case; the contractor who had quoted c£47,000 to complete the work was known to the school, had previously won similar tenders and could be secured to carry out the work over the summer holiday period.

Question: What interventions had taken place to raise student performance?

- There had been a range of activity, including targeted support for students at risk of failing to achieve Maths, English and Science (for example, around 'exam technique'), the provision of on-line and in-class resources, holiday and after school revision classes, etc.

Governors commented that the latest post-16 performance, with a very high proportion of students expecting to go on to university, would help the school's reputation. Governors were thanked for their support of the 'in School' day.

ITEM 6: GOVERNOR FUNDS UPDATE

The paper gave the background to the Funds and made proposals for spending the monies. There were formal steps to be taken, but the Trust Board had delegated management of the Funds to TAA Local Governing Body. The aim was to announce the scheme to the next Student Parliament meeting and launch it in the Autumn Term.

Governors agreed that applications supported by the Lockhart Bequest should have a sports focus; applications supported by the Trinity funds had no restriction as long as they would be of benefit to the school. A Governor Panel would be convened to hear from applicants, and their decision would be final. The Panel could choose not to make an award if it felt that applications did not reach a sufficiently high standard.

Actions: arrange for the HST to pass a s275 resolution in respect of the Lockhart Bequest and write to Trinity College Cambridge confirming the plans for these Funds.

ITEM 7: UPDATED HST RISK REGISTER

Governors reviewed the current risk register. Recruitment to TAA was healthy, with 179 places accepted for the autumn term (against a PAN of 180). However, the financial forecast was tight, because funding had not yet caught up with higher pupil numbers. A budget would be presented to the next governors' meeting.

ITEM 9: POLICY REVIEW

Two policies were presented for review and approval.

Governors were generally content with the proposed changes to the Complaints and Child Protection policies but had some detailed drafting and proofreading feedback to give. They were asked to submit comments view Mark Lewis; these could be combined, implemented and the resulting final policies circulated.

Subject to this, Governors approved the revised Policies.

Actions: Amended final policy documents to be circulated to Governors for reference.

ITEM 10: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The planned Governors in School day (12 May) was too soon. Governors agreed to defer it into the second half of the summer term. Jonathan Ellam and Mark Lewis would consult over an alternative date and circulate this to Governors in due course.

ITEM 11: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Thursday 16 June starting at 18.00. The meeting would be preceded by a walk around the school starting at c17.00.

VALEDICTORY

This had been Alan Euinton's last meeting as Chair of the local governing body, a post he had filled for the last three years, having expected to serve for about six months. He thanked colleagues on the governing body, staff and students at the school for their support and dedication across this period. He wished the school well for the future; it was a good place to learn and grow and he would not hesitate to recommend it to a parent looking for a school for their children.

He offered good wishes to Jonathan Ellam, taking the Chair from the next meeting, and to Julia Flanagan on her retirement.

Mark Lewis extended the thanks of the governing body for Alan's wise counsel and great experience, which he would miss. Governors presented the Chair with a token of appreciation for his service.

The meeting closed at 19.48.

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Signed – Chair of Governors

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Date

LOCAL GOVERNING BODY ACTION LOG

Meeting	Item	What	Who/when
19/01/16	1d	Governor Skills Audit	Clerk – 27/05/16
28/04/16	4	Electrical Safety Work – appoint contractor, based on procurement waiver.	Headteacher – 27/05/16
28/04/16	6	Propose a s275 resolution at HST meeting.	Jonathan Ellam/Clerk 27/05/16
28/04/16	9	Circulate amended Policies for reference	Clerk – 27/05/16