

THOMAS ALLEYNE ACADEMY

Minutes of the meeting of the Local Governing Body of the Academy
held on Thursday 25th June 2015 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), Howard Crompton (HC), Eirwen Palmer (EP), Julia Cooke (JC), Stuart Melbourne (SM), Dame Pat Collarbone (PC), Carol Hayman (CH) **Dr Rod Pullen (RP)**

In attendance: Clerk - Kaylee Bonja (KB), Andrew McLeod (AM) for Item 8 only

Apologies: Lynsey Steadman (LS)

Actions Summary

Item	Action	Person responsible	Deadline
3	Copies of the Ofsted Inspection Report and thanks to be extended to the governors who had recently resigned	JF	Immediate
4	Action points from the Ofsted Inspection Report to be fed in to the Academy Development Plan	JF	September 2015
7	Criteria for access to the Thomas Alleyne Fund Account to be proposed by 2 governors	HC/JE	Next meeting
	Analysis of Governor Skills Survey to be presented to governors	Clerk	Next meeting
	Analysis to show the full year position, 14/15, of activities for generating income to be provided	AM	Next meeting
8	When the outcome of the claim for popular growth funding is known a revised 15/16 budget will be produced and circulated to governors by e-mail for recommendation and comment. This will then be forwarded to Trust directors for approval. Notes will show where the adjustments have been made	ML/AM	As soon as possible
9	Future presentations of the Principal's Report will be made on a screen	JF	From next meeting
12	To explore the possibility of linking Trust policies to North Herts College Policy	ML	Next meeting
	The Policy Review calendar to be updated and circulated to governors	ML	Next meeting

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Lynsey Steadman.

Action

2. Declarations of Interest

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

None

Part 1: Strategic Items

3. Feedback from Ofsted Inspection

The Ofsted Report had been circulated to governors on 24th June 2015. The Chair thanked everyone for their efforts. The school, the staff, the students, senior leadership team, and governors had worked together to produce such a pleasing Ofsted report. Thanks would also be extended to governors who had recently resigned their position and a copy of the report would be sent to them.

The Chair made special thanks to EP for joining him in the meeting with the Ofsted Lead Inspector and to JE for being on standby.

RP expressed additional gratitude to ML and JF for the enormous positive changes they have effected at the school over the past 2-3 years.

JF reported on the inspection timescale and process. The call was received on Monday 8th June and the inspection took place on Tuesday 9th and Wednesday 10th June. Everything was prepared and a plan was in place. The inspector did not request any documentation in advance. The Lead Inspector was accompanied by team of three other inspectors. A series of paired lesson observations took place on Day 1 with the senior leadership team. Interviews took place with key subject leaders. At the end of the day feedback was given about each lesson observation. The feedback was good.

The main area identified for observation on Day 2 was the consistency of marking. ML prepared a document to show the criteria for Outstanding in Leadership and Management and how the school met the criteria. This was presented to the Lead Inspector. They were also interested in middle leadership and interviewed the Heads of English, Maths, Science, and other middle leaders.

At the end of Day 2 feedback was given to the Chair. It was very positive and three targets were given; which had been reduced from an initial five targets.

These are shown at the beginning of the Ofsted Report. The three targets will be addressed and covered by three governor in school days. The students' excellent behaviour and enthusiasm to speak positively to the inspectors about the school was commended. The results of the staff questionnaire were also very positive. The parent survey shows that 90% of those who responded would recommend the school to others.

Congratulations were given again to all involved.

The positive Ofsted Report has given the school a superb marketing tool. A press release will be issued next week, it will be added to the school website and the school twitter feed will feature the result with several quotes. A photographer will be taking photos for the new school prospectus, and a banner will be purchased and displayed to the front of the school.

Question: Will the Good Ofsted result strengthen the claim for popular growth funding?

A copy of the report has been sent and it is hoped it will strengthen the claim.

Question: the report has a recommendation that insists that students present their work neatly at all times. Is this to do with pride in their work?

Presentation of work was a focus of the inspectors and it is about pride in their work and this is linked to the quality of the teaching.

JF

A copy of the report has been sent to Paul Wilson at County with a note to thank him for helping the school to prepare for the inspection.

4. **Kirkland Rowell Survey Feedback**

The full survey results had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The survey is completed annually by staff, students and parents.

JF highlighted the following from each of the sections:

- **Students:** the results were disappointing with results for the key areas on page 1 all slightly worse than for the previous year. However, students were still very keen to tell Ofsted how much they like the school. Areas for improvement highlighted by student feedback are the toilet facilities, computer access, other facilities and too many supply staff. French and Spanish were in the bottom 3 subjects where students feel they are making good progress. This was surprising to management, but on further investigation it appears that students were set targets that were too ambitious, so student snapshots were all showing Red. Realistic targets will be set for next year so that students can feel a sense of achievement. Each category had also been broken down by Year group. Year 9 is showing consistently lower than expected results compared to schools of a similar size. The school has recognised problems with some Year 9 students and has been working hard to modify their behaviour. 6 students have attended a governor disciplinary hearing. It was noted that the school was the first choice selection for a higher percentage of the students more recently admitted than for the students in Year 9 and above.

Question: Within the bottom 3 non-academic areas what is the specific issue with discipline?

This relates to some of the students in Year 9. Other students complained about the disruption caused in lessons. There had been a lot of new admissions to Year 9 and this could have had an impact.

- **Staff:** This was overwhelmingly positive.

Question: It was positive but the percentage of staff who think the school has improved has dropped significantly from 81% to 57%. Why is this?

The overall performance score was very good and increased for a second year. The staff considered the school had improved significantly the previous year. The overall performance score is the more significant indicator.

Question: 15% of the 65 staff who completed questionnaires think the school's performance has got worse. This is a large increase on the previous year. What is behind that?

This represents 9-10 staff and could include staff who have since left the school and/or feel under pressure to meet performance targets by improving their practice and quality of teaching. The survey includes teaching and support staff.

Question: The bottom three areas included the homework completion policy. Why is this?

Staff were asked to contact parents if homework is not completed instead of setting detentions. Staff were not happy with this. A change will be implemented so that a learning/homework log will be completed and admin staff will inform parents when homework has not been completed. The exception will be the students who have high level intervention in place and for whom there are other priorities.

Homework timetables will be more closely adhered to by staff and work marked in a timely manner.

- **Parents:** this was more positive than the students' questionnaire for lots of subjects. The number of responses was less than the previous year (145 from 209). Parents completed the survey online for the first time this year. The Year 9 parents' responses were as positive as the other parents.
The responses to the 12 school's own version of Parent View questions were all positive.
- **SEF summary:** Two areas of the SEF show an increased grade by parents and two areas show a decreased grade by students. This is unusual as the grades for each usually match.

Overall the results of the survey almost fully tie in with the judgements on the Ofsted Report.

Question: Students are the best asset in promoting the outcome of the Ofsted inspection. How is this being shared with students and how will they spread the word?

Tutors have been asked to go through Ofsted report with students and feedback will be given during assemblies next week. Students will be asked to share the results with others.

Question: When do students get the letter from the inspector?

They are not given a separate letter. JF wrote a letter which accompanied the Ofsted Report and was sent to students and parents.

Question: Are governors copied in on these communications?

Yes. The letter will also be added to the website.

Question: What next? Will an action plan based on the recommendations be produced?

The recommendations and actions will be fed into the Academy Development Plan.

JF

5. Property Update

i. The Maltings

The following documents were tabled:- A Property Update, the tenders for the Maltings Refurbishment, a letter from RG Services, a proposed internal layout for the Maltings, and a requirements list for the new drama/music performance space in the Maltings.

Question: Has there been any further development or update to the White House?

No, the priority has been with the Maltings. Once this is complete and the unspent money from the Maltings has been handed over, the issues with the White House will be raised again with Herts County Council. The money is expected within the next 4 working days.

Before the renovation works commenced the building was categorised as D1 (unsafe) and now it is categorised as C1. A structural survey has been carried out to check the standard of the work completed. This has revealed remedial works are necessary which will cost £15,000-£20,000. The detail of the works is given in the letter from RG Services. The funds to be transferred from HCC to the academy are sufficient to cover this work and the refurbishment costs. The 3 companies that have submitted tenders (as detailed in the tabled report) will be asked to include the additional work and resubmit tenders.

Question: How will a decision be reached on which tender to select and who will make the decision?

Chris Hodgson (Mouchel), the academy's link for all its large projects, will assist and advise with this process. Quality and specifications will be looked at in detail.

A 'box' will be constructed within the building and will be set out as in the proposed internal layout document. The 'box' will be of a modern design and include modern lighting, flooring and furniture. After completion of all works in the Maltings, including furnishings, it is expected that there will be sufficient funding left to enable the academy to refurbish/replace the existing toilets. Chris Hodgson will survey the toilets tomorrow and advise on the best solution for each block.

ii. Proposed summer maintenance schedule

There are several site moves to take place between now and the beginning of next term. A spreadsheet of the proposed site moves and maintenance was tabled.

An operations manager has been appointed today and dependent on his start date he will help to facilitate some of the moves.

The maintenance tasks will be funded from the previous year's surplus and the monies remaining after the Maltings refurbishment is complete.

Quotes have been requested for the supply and installation of a fire detection system and fire doors and it is hoped this work will be completed over the summer. This will be funded from the successful CIF bid.

Background information about the new operations manager was shared.

Question: When is the refurbishment work to the Maltings likely to start?

JF is meeting Chris Hodgson tomorrow morning. It is ambitious to have everything completed by the start of the next term and a more detailed specification is required for some areas of work. It is hoped to start by 1st August and that it will take 4 weeks to complete.

Question: Has any progress been made regarding the issue of the school boundary around the field?

Signage has been researched and examples were shown to SLT today but they were unsuitable. Previous quotes for fencing of a suitable quality were in the region of £70,000. Other priorities have taken precedence. Signage will be used in the short term.

Part 2: Regular Business

6. Minutes of the meeting held on 30th April 2015

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

7. Matters Arising

Item 1: Complete

Item 3: A new system for assessment of progress has not been finalised. It is likely that consultation will now take place in September. An article will feature in the newsletter to inform parents of progress and state there is an intention to consult with parents.

Item 5: Complete

Item 7: The account details and statement of how much is held in the Thomas Alleyne Fund Account have been obtained. Currently £35,273.87 and £9,392 held on the smaller account. JE and HC have knowledge of the accounts history and were invited to put together a proposal of criteria for the use of the funds. This was accepted.

JF to write to Herts County Council to request the funds as required.

Outdated signage had been removed.

A draft analysis of the governor skills survey had been presented to the

HC/JE

Chair. The Clerk to complete the final version.

Item 8: Agenda item

Item 9: covered under Agenda Item 9

Item 13: Complete

Clerk

The disciplinary panel had met again. 1 boy has requested to be moved to an ESC, a managed move is being worked on for another boy; and the third boy will move to the Da Vinci Studio School of Science and Engineering in September. Governors were thanked for taking part on the panel.

A governors in school day had taken place on 20th May. Three governors had attended and found it to be very informative. Experience of the day was shared with the Ofsted inspectors.

8. Financial Report

i. Management Accounts

Management Accounts to the 31st May were circulated in advance of the meeting. The year to date surplus is £52,897.79 and the full year forecast surplus is £28,088. This is better than the budgeted surplus. The report commentary explained the variances to income and expenditure. Control processes for income from lettings and music are now in place and this income will be collected more quickly next year. Invoicing is almost all complete for this year. An analysis to show the full year position of activities for generating income will be provided at the next meeting.

AM

Question: Is there a question mark over the auditors?

There is a tender process in progress. The Audit Committee for the Trust is holding interviews next week to select from the tenders received.

Question: The bank charges incurred are very low. Why is this?

The academy benefits from free banking but no interest is receivable on the account.

ii. Proposed Budget 2015/16

A proposed budget for 2015/16 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. This contained a commentary to explain the most significant income and expenditure lines.

The proposed budget is showing a deficit of almost £200,000. A business case for popular growth funding had been presented to the EFA in March. This has been escalated to ministerial level and the academy is still waiting for the decision. If the claim for popular growth funding is successful then funding will draw down after the October census from January 2016. Half the additional funding would be received in January and the remainder would be paid in monthly instalments. Current feedback from the EFA suggests that there is a strong case for additional funding and the position is optimistic, particularly so since the Ofsted Inspection Report. It is hoped that a decision is reached by the EFA before the budget submission deadline of 31st July. ML has been in daily contact with the EFA.

AM explained the budget commentary for income and expenditure.

The top slice was discussed further and it was noted that there are implications from agreeing a top slice by the sponsor. The EFA has strict criteria to ensure that the academy receives value for money and that service level agreements must still be in place. It is believed that a top slice will provide better value. The IT service provision will remain with Herts County Council.

Exam costs have been calculated more accurately.

Question: Where is capital expenditure shown for 2015/2016?

Capital income and expenditure is not included in the revenue budget. All capital income and expenditure will show on the balance sheet. The balance sheet will be presented to governors regularly at future meetings. A capital budget of c.£15,000 has been confirmed and this will be used to purchase IT equipment and a server.

Question: Is popular growth funding repayable, similar to a loan?

No, there is no repayment requirement for popular growth funding. It is additional money for 1 year. The school would then return to the lagged funding system.

Question: Why has the budget for income from activities for generating funds been set at £40,000 less than the 2014/15 forecast?

The balance transferred from the Fund Account, c.£40,000, was included in the 2014/15 figures. This was a one-off exceptional item and the budgeted income from activities for generating funds remains at the same level.

Question: Has the cost of utilities for an additional building, the Maltings, been factored into the budget?

Not directly because improvements to buildings across the school site will generate savings and it is believed the net effect will be cost neutral.

The following process for 2015/16 budget recommendation was agreed:

When the outcome of the claim for popular growth funding is known a revised budget will be produced and circulated to governors by e-mail for recommendation and comment. This will then be forwarded to Trust directors for approval.

Notes to show where the adjustments are made were requested.

ML/AM

iii. Cost Analysis of Lettings

This will be a focus for the new operations manager. The governing body needs assurance that income from lettings exceeds the costs so that it can be certain that lettings is an income generating activity.

AM was thanked and he left the meeting.

9. **Principal's Report**

The report was circulated in advance of the meeting. The report was in a new format and included a series of 14 spreadsheets detailing key performance indicators over different areas and a summary sheet detailing key issues and actions.

JF asked for questions on the different spreadsheets and for feedback about the new style and format of her report.

Closing the Gap: This was given a special mention by Ofsted. The school is successfully closing the gap.

GCSE: The prediction stated on the spreadsheet is that 60% of students will achieve 5A*CEM but if one or two students had a bad day on exam day then this could realistically fall to 56%

Staff Recruitment: This is one of the biggest problems for the academy. A vacancy exists for 1 maths teacher; an operations manager has been appointed; support and admin vacancies have been opened to the North Herts College 'at risk of redundancy' staff and will be advertised more widely next week.

Question: Is recruitment a general problem?

It is for maths, science and English teachers. The positive Ofsted Report should make the school more attractive to teachers.

Question: Did the Herts Roadshow attract any teachers to the academy?

A part-time maths teacher was successfully recruited. Other teachers had been recruited via personal networking and 2 teachers had been recruited from Canada via an overseas agency.

The teaching Alliance, Catalyst, is coming to the school tomorrow to work with the humanities and ICT departments. The teaching alliance will provide support to the school's middle leaders and the pastoral support team. The value of support is £60,000 and it has been funded by the Local Authority.

Roll: The number of 6th form students from September is currently between 42 and 49. There are a number of interviews to be carried out, and over the summer holiday period a dedicated phone number will be available to students interested in joining the 6th form.

Question: Is the Renaissance group of 6th form students growing in size? *It is growing slightly. The size of the current Year 11 cohort is only 50 so it will be encouraging if external recruitment takes place to maintain the current size of the 6th form. It is anticipated the 6th form will grow in size as the larger cohorts from Year 9 and below reach Year 12. The Renaissance branding will no longer be used.*

Question: Are all the Year 12 students moving into Year 13?

Yes

The new style report was liked for viewing on a tablet or pc. However, the formatting was not set correctly for printing on single pages or for uploading to Board Papers. Future presentations of the report will be made on a screen.

JF

10. Trust Matters

A verbal report was given.

The last Trust meeting had been held on 19th May. Matt Hamnett, North Herts College Principal, presented his ideas for the Trust and its relationship with North Herts College. This will be shared with governors at the Governor Conference next week. It was a positive presentation with the Trust becoming a key part of a group rather than an addition. Communications between the College and the Trust have improved.

Adrian Hawkins, Chair of the Trust, spoke positively about his visits to each of the schools.

The Da Vinci Studio School of Creative Enterprise and North Hertfordshire College Centre for the Arts have been competing for students, particularly for media courses and art and design courses. The plan for a new creative partnership to be formed in September 2015 was outlined. All media courses will move to the studio school in Letchworth and all post 16 art and design courses will move to the new Hitchin campus. ML will oversee all accredited curriculum areas and Karen Barker, the studio school principal, will oversee the creative curriculum.

Funding for the renovation of the final wing of the Old Grammar School will be sought so that art and design courses can move back to Letchworth and a full creative campus is created in Letchworth. A music faculty will operate from the Town Hall, Letchworth.

Over time the studio school could potentially increase to 500 students and the Trust would be comprised of 2 of the 3 biggest studio schools in the country.

Question: Does the initial ceiling of 400 students apply?

Studio schools are smaller than other secondary schools but they are not limited to 400 students. Discussions on the branding and status of the creative school will take place to enable growth to be achieved most effectively.

The Trust is planning to grow through the sponsorship of additional schools.

11. Risk Management

The Risk Log had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The current high risks – 1, 5, and 6, and the medium risks – 3 and 4, had been covered in the meeting. The low risk – 2 will be removed from the risk log.

12. Policies

The Policy Review Group had met and reviewed three policies- complaints, whistleblowing, and health & safety. The demands on staff time from the two Ofsted Inspections has delayed the follow up actions and North Herts College is currently reviewing its policies. ML will explore with the possibility of linking the policies to the college policies.

ML

The SEND policy, which is based on the County model, will be taken to the Trust for final approval.

An updated cycle policy calendar was requested.

ML

13. Any Other Business

- i. **Question:** Why is the academy Sports Day held at the Ridlins Stadium. Is there a cost for this and why is Sports Day not held at the academy?

Ridlins is a proper athletics stadium with good quality track and field facilities. The students enjoy competing there and it has a great atmosphere. The cost is considered worthwhile. The next sports Day will take place on Friday 3rd July, 8.30am-2pm

- ii. The next Open Evening will be held on 1st October 2015. Governors were asked to volunteer to assist.

The next meeting will take place on at 6pm on Thursday 8th October at the Thomas Alleyne Academy.

The Chair thanked governors for their efforts over the year and wished everyone a good summer break.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm

Signed as an accurate record of the meeting

Chair's signature:

Date: