



## 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 21 September 2017, starting at 18.00.

### PRESENT

Jonathan Ellam (Chair)  
Julia Cooke  
Mark Lewis (Headteacher)  
Roger Luxton

Tara McGovern  
Stuart Melbourne  
Lynsey Steadman  
Duncan Visser

### IN ATTENDANCE

Melanie Cook (Deputy Headteacher)

Robert Dale (Clerk)

### WELCOME

- Members welcomed the newly elected staff governor, Duncan Visser, to his first meeting.
- Two other members had also been reappointed: Julia Cooke and Howard Crompton.

### ITEM 1a: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Howard Crompton and Rev 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:

- Develop brief statement on banding and setting arrangements for the next academic year which can be shared with parents. **Action under way.** The SLT was concerned that doing so could prompt parental concerns and would discuss this.
- Send diary appointments to governors. **Action complete.** Diary appointments had been circulated to governors.
- Circulate link to on-line training to governors. **Action complete.** The link to on-line Prevent training had been shared with governors.
- Publish the new policy on the school website. **Action under way.** The Prevent Policy was about to be added to the school website.

## ITEM 2: GOVERNOR RECRUITMENT UPDATE

- Apart from welcoming Duncan Visser, (elected as a staff governor) another candidate was proposed for appointment as a local governor. Jenny White was a Head of Year at St Chris's School, in Letchworth. She would bring strong practitioner expertise, including sophisticated data analysis and an interest in encouraging the more able, which would support the school's ambition to raise expectations and outcomes. Governors endorsed the appointment which would be made by the Trust Board.
- Nominations for a parent governor to succeed Eirwen Palmer would be sought in this half term (involving the Parent Forum); one possible candidate had come forward.

**Action:** Make arrangements for the election of a new Parent Governor.

## ITEM 3: 2017/18 AIMS, AMBITIONS AND PRIORITIES

Governors received a presentation describing the Trust's aims and priorities. The key emphasis for 2017/18 would be on strengthening the way in which the Hart Learning Group's constituent parts – including the Hart Schools Trust – worked together to deliver its mission. Within this, The Trust's aim remained growth and the provision of a distinctive education offer to the Stevenage area. Key messages were:

- Because of its structure, the Group was able as a whole to offer education at all key stages and across academic and vocational routes.
- Group-wide priorities for the year were broadly consistent and focussed on success for students, Group curriculum development, client engagement for apprenticeships asset disposals and investment, financial health and Trust expansion.
- There was Group-wide consistency of enablers of success – good staff engagement, strong project management, better business insight from more sophisticated data collection/analysis, technology development and a collaborative culture.
- Summer results had been pleasing. There were issues to address, including stretching the most able and raising expectations but TAA was well placed to progress.
- Introducing the Bridge Programme in 2017/18 aligned with the school's five core values and five 11-16 year groups was an important element of cross-Group working. Heads of Year at TAA had embraced the concept and were trying to build it into schemes of learning where it made sense to do so. It was intended to explore with Trust Primary schools whether the programme would work well at that level too.
- A five-part development plan had been created and linked to individual SMT members, and the same approach would be used to support performance management with all staff being asked to choose three of the five hexagons to focus on. Key messages for staff included keeping on top of the small details and try to ensure that classrooms are tidy, staff and students arrive for lessons on time, uniform is correct etc.

**Question:** *Was there evidence that this approach worked?* Some students had tested boundaries; staff had responded well. Punctuality was much better. The Open evening had been well-attended, with positive parent feedback. Y11 had made an excellent start.

**Question:** *Was the Bridge Programme a USP for the Trust?* Potentially; no other Trust in the area could offer academic, technical and vocational opportunities on an equal basis.

**Question:** *Was this message reaching the parent community?* Hitherto, the Trust had not promoted itself heavily, but this could be reviewed as more positive stories could be told.

Governors welcomed the presentation.

#### **ITEM 4: SUMMER EXAM DATA**

Governors received analysis of the summer examination data. Maths results had been excellent, and the proportion of students achieving grade 4+ and 5+ in both Maths and English was above national average levels, a considerable achievement as the cohort had been below average on entry. There was still much to learn from this year's achievements, particularly for options subjects, where GCSEs would adopt the new format in summer 2018.

There had been some disappointing subject results and action was being taken to address the issues identified (including lack of subject specialisms, staff turnover, and a genuinely difficult curriculum). Stretching the most able and closing the gap between Pupil Premium and non Pupil Premium students was a key priority. In future, performance measures could legitimately exclude 'outliers' – such as the student who had left to join the RAF.

A-level performance was up, albeit with a small cohort. In future, 'second chance' students would be redirected to alternative provision rather than being accepted into the sixth form.

**Question:** *Was there an opportunity to raise student aspirations over university destinations?* Yes, raising expectations was part of the plan, with the Bridge Programme encouraging students to think about their future career paths. The potential effect of the post-16 target grade system would be reviewed in case this was limiting ambition.

**Question:** *Why did humanities subjects not achieve well at GCSE this year?* There were reasons for lower performance including inexperienced staff, catching up on a poor Y10, the need for a more 'academic' level of engagement. These were being addressed.

**Question:** *Was the chance to take General Studies AS level still being considered?* Yes, this was being considered for higher ability GCSE students.

Governors congratulated the school on a strong exam performance ahead of expectations.

#### **ITEM 5: PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

The number of students had risen above 850; based on the current PAN, there was space across all year groups to take 150 more students. The budget had been based on gaining 100 students overall, which had been achieved, but as previously discussed, there would be an in-year deficit, expected to be recovered in the 2018/19 financial year. The new finance system was working well, and the new homework system had been positively received.

**Question:** *Had Maths teaching been affected by the resignations reported?* Not visibly. Agency staff were managing, but alternative longer-term solutions were being put in place. The head of Maths was working hard to ensure there was good team spirit and adequate resources to support colleagues.

**Question:** *Were there opportunities to retrain non-Maths specialists?* The challenge was that this just moved the shortage around within the school from one specialism to another.

Governors noted a new structure for staff meetings, which ensured that data analysis and Safeguarding were kept in the forefront of staff thinking. Governors also noted the estates work completed over the summer. A site walk would take place before the next meeting.

**Question:** *Why did attendance appear to be lower than expected?* There had been some 'in year admissions', a few school transfers, and one non-attender who had now been taken off the roll. More detailed analysis would be carried out and reported at the next meeting.

**Question:** *Were there more looked after children than usual on the roll?* Yes, there were a higher number than before.

## **ITEM 6: GOVERNOR FUNDS APPLICATION PROCESS**

No changes were proposed to the Governor Funds processes for 2017/18, but in the light of the recent appointment of Devon Woolley who would be responsible for this area, it was suggested that this be deferred until the Student Parliament meeting in the new year.

**Action:** Discuss timing for submission of proposals with Devon Woolley.

## **ITEM 7: GOVERNOR IN SCHOOL DAYS**

Governors agreed dates for Governor in School days. SLT links were confirmed as being:

■ Leadership	Mark Lewis	Jonathan Ellam and Howard Crompton
■ Curriculum	Mel Cook	Tara McGovern and Stuart Melbourne
■ Outcomes	Klaas Luchies	Roger Luxton
■ Teaching & Learning	Helen Russell	Jenny White
■ Behaviour	Devon Woolley	Kirsty Ross
■ Primary Link	Associate SLT	New parent governor

## **ITEM 8: ADMISSIONS**

Any changes to a school's admissions policy required that a consultation be carried out with the local community. As it was proposed to add two new criteria for admissions with effect from 2019/20, the LGB was asked to comment on the proposed criteria:

- Children attending Trust primary schools;
- Children of staff working at Trust schools.

**Question:** *Were the criteria unusual?* There were local precedents. There had been controversy about the first criterion in London but a similar clause had been accepted locally.

**Question:** *How many Stevenage Primary schools sent children to TAA?* Last year's intake had come from more than 30 schools, but that was expected to fall. Several parents of Roebuck children had failed to gain places in 2017/18 and the same was likely in 2018/19.

**Question:** *Was there room for TAA to expand?* The current PAN was 180 and there was still room to take students in all years, though the school could soon become oversubscribed. Discussions about expanding secondary places in Stevenage were going on and TAA was an option, though there was no certainty of growth.

**Question:** *How would feeder primaries react to Trust schools being given priority places at the school?* We would continue to develop our positive relationship with our local primary schools regardless of their academy status. We would hope the admissions arrangements for Trust schools would be an attractive proposition to potential new Trust schools.

**Governors recommended** that a proposed consultation on changes to admissions arrangements go ahead in time to implement them for 2019/20, if they were accepted.

**Action:** Present recommendation to the Trust Board.

## ITEM 9: REVIEW OF POLICIES

Two policies were provided for information and review. The first, on Freedom of Speech, was a Trust Policy and did not need approval by the local governing body. The second, on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), was for consideration by governors.

- The SEND Policy had been updated to include the names of the current responsible staff members and to refresh the presentation. There were no material changes to the school's obligation under the government's Prevent strategy.
- Governors adopted both policies.

**Action:** Publish the policies on the Academy website.

## ITEM 10: RISK REGISTER

- The Risk Register had been updated to include new risks, including the recruitment of qualified Maths staff, implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation in May 2018, a future shortfall in pupil recruitment and sixth form development. The deficit budget and the GDPR risk had the highest ratings but were both being mitigated.
- Governors noted the latest risk register.

## ITEM 11: TRUST BOARD FEEDBACK

- The Trust Board had not met since the last LGB meeting. A local governing body for the Roebuck Academy had been established with Stephen Marshman in the Chair. The potential for 'exchange visits' between LGBs was being considered.

## ITEM 12: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### Outstanding Governor nomination

- A member of the judging panel had visited the school to discuss the nomination; being shortlisted was a major achievement given the high level of competition. The winner would be announced at the Governor Conference in November.

### Open Evening Feedback

- An observation from the Open Evening had been that the sports facilities at the school were badly in need of decoration. Estimates for this work had been provided and at present were not affordable. However, work was beginning to develop an estates plan including all maintenance and development issues in a comprehensive strategy.

## ITEM 13: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting would take place on Thursday 23 November 2017, starting at 18.00. It would be preceded by a site walk from 17.30 for as many governors as could attend.

The meeting closed at 19.55.

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Signed – Chair of Governors

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Date

## LOCAL GOVERNING BODY ACTION LOG

Meeting	Item	What	Who	When
13/07/17	4.	Develop brief statement on banding and setting arrangements for the next academic year which can be shared with parents. UPDATE – Further discussion will take place with the SLT.	Mark Lewis	31/08/17
21/09/17	2.	Make arrangements for the election of a new Parent Governor.	Mark Lewis	31/10/17
21/09/17	6.	Discuss timing for submission of proposals with Devon Woolley.	Mark Lewis	31/10/17
21/09/17	8.	Present recommendation to the Trust Board.	Mark Lewis/Jonathan Ellam	11/10/17
21/09/17	9.	Publish the Freedom of Speech and SEND policies on the Academy website.	Robert Dale	31/10/17