

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 Thursday 8 December 2016, starting at 18.00.

PRESENT

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

Tara McGovern
Stuart Melbourne
Eirwen Palmer
Lynsey Steadman

IN ATTENDANCE

Myles Catley (Head Boy)
Melanie Cook (Deputy Headteacher)
Eleanor Palmer (Head Girl)

Caroline Tyrwhitt (Assistant Headteacher)
Robert Dale (Clerk)

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Tara McGovern to her first meeting, and introduced Myles Catley and Eleanor Palmer (Head Boy and Head Girl) presenting Item 2, the Student Parliament Report.

ITEM 1A: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Cliff Canning, Carol Hayman.

ITEM 1B: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- None.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- Agreed 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.
- Make contact with RAW Biomass and come back to a forthcoming LGB to discuss options. **Action complete.** The proposal had been endorsed by the Trust, reviewed by the Head of Estates and the Group SMT and was now entering the planning stage, with works being arranged to minimise disruption.
- Update agenda for 8 December meeting to include behaviour and data analysis presentations. **Action complete.** See Item 3 for Behaviour presentation. Data would come to the February meeting, once mock examinations had been taken.
- Notify SLT members of the proposed links. **Action complete.** Governors were reminded to submit written reports from their visits;

Action: circulate Governor Visit templates with the minutes.

- Update the agenda plan to show the reporting arrangements. **Action complete.**
- Invite governors to participate in the bid review process. **Action complete.** See Items 2 and 8.
- Circulate information about Governor training from Herts for Learning. **Action complete.**
- Invite Klaas Luchies to present at future meeting. **Action complete.** Klaas would attend the February meeting.

ITEM 2: STUDENT PARLIAMENT REPORT

- The Student Parliament was active and had met recently. It had decided to give themes to each of its meetings, to help provide a focus. The form representatives were actively gathering student views on issues to bring for discussion and were not afraid to ask challenging questions of the Head and staff.
- The recent meeting had considered bids to the Governors Funds, and had agreed to support (a) a bid for more cycle racks to encourage cycling to school, sport and fitness; and (b) a bid to upgrade resources in the sixth form common room.
- There had been a very high standard of bids presented, and the Thomas Alleyne Supporters Association (TASA) had agreed to support one of the unsuccessful bids (for more outside sports equipment) and to contribute to funding the cycle racks. Governors suggested that students and TASA approach one or more of the local supermarkets for support; funds raised by the plastic bag levy went towards local 'good causes', often including projects put forward by schools.
- Governors asked:
 - **Question:** *To what extent was the Parliament a real voice for students?* The impression was that students were genuinely willing to speak up, to engage with other students and wanted more opportunities to get involved. Adjustments had been made to give more time at lunchtimes to maximise participation.
 - **Question:** *Were student views being responded to?* Yes. The impression was that students were listened to and actions taken.
- Governors thanked Myles and Eleanor for their report, and they left the meeting.

ITEM 3: BEHAVIOUR POLICY – IMPACT

- The presentation by Caroline Tyrwhitt briefed governors on the implementation and impact of the behaviour policy. This was underpinned by ideas drawn from neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), which was being applied and developed through training across the school (with a number of teaching and non-teaching staff attending training sessions on Saturdays leading to a qualification).
- Impact was evidenced by:
 - increased team working (eg staff supporting student time in the reflection room)
 - improved attendance – students now had 95.1% attendance (higher than the national average of 94.7%) and over £3,000 had been saved against the supply line because of lower staff absence.

- positive feedback from students, parents and staff, and fewer complaints (eg about detentions).
- Faster behaviour management enabling staff to reduce the seriousness and frequency of problems, freeing up time to work with small groups of students aiming to *prevent* problems arising.
- Increased rewards and fewer sanctions (112 detentions this term against 235 in the equivalent period in 2015).
- Other schools were showing interest in the approach, and it was a potential USP for the school. Governors commented that exemplary attitudes and student behaviour had been evident during their recent visit. Governors asked:
- **Question:** *How could teachers' use of NLP language and techniques be monitored?* There were several ways: (a) by observing students to see if they were using the language and techniques taught; (b) by monitoring patterns of 'on call usage'; and (c) during learning walks.
- **Question:** *The reflection paperwork required a detailed response from students to a wide range of questions. Was this intentional?* A great deal of preparatory steps had been gone through before reaching this point, and that would help students to reflect should that be necessary. The form was intended to require high levels of student engagement
- **Question:** *Did the school feel 'learned helplessness' was a gender issue?* No. This was not a behaviour found predominantly in a particular gender; resilience (or lack) could be found across all genders.
- Governors thanked Caroline Tyrwhitt for an excellent and informative presentation and she left the meeting.

ITEM 4: GOVERNORS IN SCHOOL DAY – FEEDBACK

- Governors had welcomed the chance to spend time in school recently; the feedback given had been valuable and was being acted on. For example,
- A Year 11 Assembly had explained what the new sixth form offer was, and an Options evening had covered the same ground;
- Meetings with more-able Year 11s had taken place to identify what more support they would like to improve outcomes.
- All staff had been observed and a work scrutiny carried out, which showed that Y11 books were being marked regularly and the Gold feedback system was being used. More consistency in providing good quality feedback was needed. Middle leaders were being trained to address this in the New Year.
- Governors confirmed that they found the school very open and receptive and that the morning had been engaging and productive. They suggested that the focuses for the next day (19 January 2017) should be the use of NLP techniques in lessons, and behaviour, with one-to-one sessions with students and review of planners and reflective journals. The visit should be focussed on Key Stage 3.

Action: Confirm arrangements for Governors in school day on 19 January 2017.

ITEM 5: PROGRESS 8 YOUTUBE VIDEO

- Members agreed to view the video explanation at home ahead of the next meeting, when the focus would be on data and analysis.

Action: Governors to view the video using the link circulated by email.

ITEM 6: PERFORMANCE UPDATE

- The school's approach to using and analysing data had improved markedly and the senior team was using material gathered to explore how to monitor student progress better. A different approach to setting student performance targets had been adopted, to avoid placing unreasonable expectations, while retaining aspirational goals. Training for middle leaders about this approach would take place at the start of the New Year. Overall, there was more confidence about the forecasting this year.
- A joint sixth form offer had been launched with Barnwell School. This would enable both schools to maintain (and extend) their curriculum offer within a sustainable cost base. All of the subjects currently provided at TAA (except Law) would continue to be delivered from the TAA site, but there would be access to other programmes delivered from Barnwell. Planning was now moving to considering how to timetable teaching in blocks to minimise transport movements between sites.
- There were 1.4 vacancies for January (0.4 Maths and 1.0 English). Two Maths posts previously filled by agency staff now had permanent appointments.
- The Trust's Audit Committee and internal audit service had carried out detailed scrutiny of financial and non-financial policies and practices, and Howard Crompton had agreed to attend finance meetings on a termly basis to provide additional monitoring and assurance to the LGB.
- **Action:** Make HST Board and Audit Committee minutes available to members.

ITEM 7: ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT

- The Annual Safeguarding Report met statutory and regulatory obligations. Eirwen Palmer was the nominated safeguarding governor; she confirmed that she had participated in the review process during the year.
- Members noted that there had been no allegations made against staff during the year.

ITEM 8: GOVERNOR FUND – UPDATE

- The process agreed earlier in the year had been implemented, and excellent bids had been presented by the students; Governors had participated in the review process and the winners notified on the same day.
- Funds were still held by County and discussions about releasing initially the agreed support, but ultimately the whole of the Trinity and Lockhart monies were ongoing. It was likely that governance arrangements would need to be put on a more formal footing in order to secure release.

ITEM 9: RISK MANAGEMENT

- Governors reviewed and endorsed the current Risk Register.

ITEM 10: TRUST UPDATE

- Members were asked to treat this item as strictly confidential.
- The Trust meeting had welcomed the quality and rigour of challenge provided by the LGB to the proposals related to a proposed Biomass installation at the Thomas Alleyne Academy. This had led to further work being carried out on the proposal, including a desktop comparison with other options. The Trust approved the proposal, and asked for a further check by the Group SMT to ensure another independent review was carried out. This had been taken place, and the proposal scrutinised by the Group Head of Estates. The proposal was moving forward into a detailed planning stage with the aim of completing the installation by Easter 2017.
- As well as reviewing the draft Report and Financial Statements, the Audit Committee had discussed the Trust's growth strategy and was conscious of the demands integrating a number of schools at once would place on leadership resources.
- Roebuck Primary School and Nursery had asked to convert and join the Trust; this was being considered by the Regional School Commissioner and Headteacher Board at the end of December.
- It had become clear that action had not been taken quickly by DfE to limit concern for the future of the Barclay School and that staff and students were leaving. This made the task of turning the school round far more difficult.
- DfE had also advised that it would not permit the Trust to take on another secondary school as well as Barclay, until a turnaround had been achieved (within two years).
- This would make a potential arrangement with Barnwell School hard to achieve in the short to medium term. Governors asked:

Question: *What was the relative position of the two schools?* Barnwell served a different catchment on the other side of Stevenage, and although a Grade 3 (Requires Improvement) school, it appeared to be improving. A sixth form consortium had just been launched with TAA. On balance, it would be a better addition to the Trust's portfolio – although the risks associated with another Trust taking on the school next door to TAA remained.

ITEM 11: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- None.

ITEM 12: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting would take place on Thursday 2 February 2017, starting at 18.00.
- The Senior Leadership Team would be reminded to agree dates for the next round of link meetings and learning walks.

Action: Arrange link meetings for the Spring Term.

The meeting closed at 20.00.

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Signed – Chair of Governors

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Date

LOCAL GOVERNING BODY ACTION LOG

Meeting	Item	What	Who/when
08/12/16	1d.	Circulate Governor Visit templates with the minutes.	Robert Dale 16/12/16
08/12/16	4.	Confirm arrangements for Governors in school day on 19 January 2017.	Mark Lewis 16/12/16
08/12/16	5.	Governors to view the video using the link circulated by email.	All Governors 27/01/17
08/12/16	6.	Make HST Board and Audit Committee minutes available to members.	Robert Dale 16/12/16
08/12/16	12	Arrange link meetings for the Spring Term.	Mark Lewis 27/01/17