



THE THOMAS ALLEYNE ACADEMY LOCAL GOVERNING BODY

A meeting of the Local Governing Body for the Thomas Alleyne Academy was held in the new Sixth Form Centre (Room C20) at the Thomas Alleyne Academy, Stevenage and by videoconference on Thursday 13 October 2022 starting at 18.00.

PRESENT

Hilary Clifford (Chair)
Robert Baldock
Julia Cooke
Cate Ducati (by videoconference)
David Gray

Mark Lewis (Headteacher)
Jo Mellett
Kerry Pritchett
Lynsey Steadman
Jenny White (by videoconference).

IN ATTENDANCE

Melanie Cook (Deputy Headteacher)

Robert Dale (Governance Professional)

WELCOME

ITEM 1A: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Howard Crompton and Tara McGovern.

ITEM 1B: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- Jo Mellett declared that she had a new role working for HFL Education in the leadership recruitment team, which also involves support for Teach in Herts website. Kerry Pritchett declared that she was Head of Quality at North Hertfordshire College..

ITEM 1C: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2022 were agreed and signed as an accurate record of proceedings.

ITEM 1D: MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

- Actions had been followed-up as indicated below:
 - Provide diversity analysis for student and staff cohorts at TAA. **Action Ongoing.** This data was available at school and would be shared with governors once Matt Cox has had a chance to be more embedded in his role.
 - Propose new Link Governor arrangements for 2022/23 and beyond. **Action complete.** This matter was on the agenda at Item 3.
 - Provide demonstration of Arbor at the next Governor in School session. **Action complete.** This was provided at the recent session in school on 3 October.
 - Include progress reports on the school development plan on the future agenda plan. **Action complete** This matter was on the agenda at Item 8.

- Update the Risk Register as proposed. **Action under way.** Following a discussion at the HST A&R Committee on 21 September, it had been agreed to leave the energy cost and teacher pay/industrial action risks off the register. However, the increased level of uncertainty suggests that although senior leaders were monitoring these risks closely in any event, it was now appropriate to update the Register to include them. This would take place after this meeting.
- Include the Policy list on a future agenda. **Action complete.** Work on refreshing the Policy list had been undertaken by Kate Prince and the latest version would be presented at the December meeting.
- Make arrangements for parent governor election. **Action under way.** This would take place after half term.
- Contact Armin Salvatore to establish whether he wished to join the LGB. **Action complete.** No response had been received to contact earlier in the summer.
- Make arrangements for replacement or repainting of relevant building signs. **Action complete.** This had been part of the summer works programme.

ITEM 2: ANNUAL ELIGIBILITY AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS REVIEW

- This paper was a standard annual reminder in respect of declarations of interest and eligibility. Governors were asked to provide a written confirmation that the interests recorded on the register are correct or to provide an updated statement. A separate reminder would be issued to members after the meeting.
- **Governors agreed** to ensure their declarations were up to date.

Action: Issue reminder about returning 2022/23 Declarations of Interest.

ITEM 3: LINK GOVERNOR ARRANGEMENTS

- Proposed Governor in school sessions had been circulated – with one event in each half term. Subjects covered would include Special Educational Needs, Pupil Premium, Sixth form and student leadership, Teaching and learning/professional development; and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Governors were encouraged to put as many of these dates in their diaries as they could manage.
- It was agreed that Safeguarding for SEND, Mental Health and Well-being and MCR pathways might also be incorporated into the sessions. A close look at how the school's values were reflected in teaching and learning would be valuable.

Action: Consider adjusting the Governor in School programme to incorporate governor suggestions.

- Governors asked if one of the sessions could be held in the afternoon, so that governors could see some of the transitions (eg from lunch to lessons and from end of school to after-school clubs etc) and it was agreed that this could be arranged.

Action: Reschedule one of the proposed sessions to an afternoon start time.

- Governors discussed proposed link governor responsibilities for 2022/23. The final agreed arrangements are shown in the table below.

Action: Link staff to arrange meetings/contact with link governors.

SLT Member	Main responsibilities	Link Governor 2022/23
Mark Lewis	Headteacher Finance	Hilary Clifford Howard Crompton
Mel Cook	Outcomes, Curriculum, SEND, Staff training and development	Tara McGovern
Katie Bailey	Character, Y11 & Sixth form, Careers, PSHE, Equity, diversity, inclusion	Hilary Clifford David Gray
Devon Woolley	Behaviour, Child Protection, CLA, Student Wellbeing & MH,	David Gray
Klaas Luchies	Attendance, data, pupil premium, catch up premiums	Jenny White
Christine Harvey	English & reading strategy	Bob Baldock
Kate Prince	Business Manager, Staff wellbeing	Jo Mellett
Lynsey Steadman	Science, Computer Science	Cate Ducati
Helen Russell	ECT, Student leadership, enrichment	Kerry Pritchett

ITEM 4: GCSE AND A-LEVEL RESULTS – SUMMER 2022

- Overall, the school had been pleased with the summer examination results, which the paper reported in detail. This year's examinations were the first since summer 2019, and there was considerable uncertainty about how learners would respond to the new experience, and about how grade boundaries would be set.
- For GCSEs, the headline result was a Progress 8 score of -0.21 -slightly worse than the measure obtained from SISRA reported in the paper. This was to be expected, as SISRA had a narrower set of data than the national figures. STEM subjects had performed particularly strongly, but there were concerns about some of the 'Open' elements making up the P8 score – such as Spanish. Six such areas were large enough to affect the school's data and had the capacity to improve and would be the focus for improvement during 2022/23. These were Art, Business, Drama, English Literature, Geography and Spanish. There were no common improvement factors – all needed individual approaches.
- There was an achievement gap between pupil premium (PP) and non pupil premium learners, albeit slightly reduced from the 2019 position. PP learners had, in general, suffered from the greatest loss of learning as a result of the COVID-19 emergency. This would be an overarching improvement priority in 2022/23.

Question: *What was the reason for the different outcomes in English Language and English Literature?* There had been a lot of actions taken in the English department during the year, and it had been disappointing this had not yet impacted on Literature outcomes. Reading fluency was an important element; students who performed well tended to read more. In addition, writing stamina was essential and few other subjects required students to write three 50 minute essays one after the other. The other issue was general 'cultural capital',

and the school would seek to widen the breadth and diversity of students' general knowledge. Y10 were now being encouraged to read a much broader range of books and an improvement in Literature outcomes was anticipated.

Question: *How did other Stevenage schools perform?* It was not possible to make such a direct comparison – but anecdotally, local schools did not get better results. There had been concerns about the quality of marking for some subjects - History, for example, secured a number of improved re-grades.

Question: *Given that several of the lower-performing subjects had been in the same position for some time, what assurance was there that this could be addressed in 2022/23?* There was some evidence – eg from the Art department – that actions already taken were starting to have an effect.

Question: *Would there be Deep Dives in each subject?* Yes. There would be tough conversations in some areas.

Question: *Where would TAA appear in performance tables when they were published?* That was uncertain, but better than when the last tables were published.

Question: *Had advance notice of exam topics been helpful?* There had been mixed views about this; some felt it had had a positive impact – but it had also been poorly implemented.

Question: *Were this year's results genuinely better than 2018/19 or just an artefact of the changed grade boundaries this year?* They were considered to represent a real improvement.

ITEM 5: HEADTEACHER'S PERFORMANCE REPORT

- The headteacher reported that following the recent school Open Evenings, there were around 130 first choice applications, similar to the same period in 2021/22 and it was expected that the school would have a full Y7 intake in 2023/24. There had been very positive feedback from parents attending the events.
- Attendance was currently at 94.2% but was falling despite the efforts being made. The outcome from the first week of term had been above the national average but it was extremely hard to sustain this. Pupil Premium attendance was lower at 89.4%. Staff had endeavoured to remove barriers to attendance - the second-hand uniform shop had been well used – and home visits were also taking place. So far, there had been fewer suspensions than in 2021/22; one possible Y11 exclusion was to be considered.
- The school had been awarded the Character Education kitemark, and support during the visit from the Chair was appreciated. The sixth form was highly visible and almost all were involved in school leadership roles of one kind or another.
- A recent visit by Liz Shapland had resulted in some excellent feedback as well as some areas for improvement. In particular, ensuring there was a clear strategy behind support for reading for SEND learners; there was a good deal of enthusiasm in support of these activities, but more direction was needed.
- Klaas Luchies had reported on the significant level of activity in support of attendance at the recent Governor in School morning. Governors congratulated the Eco Committee for achieving Green Flag status.

Question: *How would reading fluency be improved in KS4?* There was a scheme to support learners whose reading age was below chronological age (but above 10) at Y7.

Question: *How might creative thinking be encouraged?* Confidence to have creative ideas was key to securing top grades; this was encouraged by discussion. Teachers also needed to be confident in their classroom practice and behaviour management. Too much focus on compliance might affect their own ability to inspire. Liz Shapland had certainly observed 'purposeful' lessons – but perhaps more space for debate was required.

Question: *Did students put the same amount of effort into all subjects?* Some had certainly experienced exam fatigue – and did not attend the second of two exams. Some needed more support to work independently and it was possible that overemphasis on the importance of STEM created a sense that humanities subjects were less valuable.

Question: *Had the achievement gap between PP and non PP learners closed or widened since 2018/29?* It was approximately the same. Attendance was often the biggest challenge and some students in this group had very turbulent home lives.

- A-level results had also shown an improvement against 2018/19 with increases in the average grade and average points score. Students had gone onto a range of positive destinations including several Russell Group universities and good apprenticeship opportunities. Almost all were first choices with a couple through clearing – though clearing was no longer a 'second class' option; the marketplace for higher education was more complicated.

Question: *Was the PP cohort expected to increase as a result of the cost of living crisis?* Possibly; and this would provide the school with extra funding. However, TAA had a relatively low proportion of PP learners (188, or 21%) compared with the national average (c30%) but a high proportion compared with the Hertfordshire average. Mostly White British, statistically, this was the most difficult cohort to improve.

- **The LGB welcomed** the report and congratulated the school on making progress in improving outcomes.

ITEM 6: ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2021/22

- This was the formal annual report outlining the school's activities in support of Safeguarding during 2021/22. Governors asked:

Question: *What training for staff was provided in respect of harmful sexual behaviours?* This was covered in the training provided by the Designated Safeguarding Lead for all staff.

Question: *What had happened about the anonymous complaint?* This had been received by Ofsted during the summer; Ofsted had asked the local authority to investigate and they had commissioned HFL Education to do so. Their representative had visited the school, reviewed policies, student records and considered several case studies of how the school dealt with bullying and instances of suicidal ideation. A report would be produced shortly, but it was expected to conclude that the school had strong systems and processes in place to support student well-being and to deal appropriately with instances of bullying.

- Governor Safeguarding training needed to be updated; a reminder would be issued to Governors to book onto training provided via HFL Education.

Action: Issue reminder about Safeguarding training to the LGB.

- **The LGB welcomed** the report.

ITEM 7: ANNUAL HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT 2021/22

- Governors welcomed this report which showed that the school was compliant with Health and Safety requirements. There were some actions to be followed up in respect of Asbestos training for new estates staff, the replacement of Lightning Rods (to take place during half term) and seeking quotations for the repair of the flooring in the weights room.
- **The TAA LGB welcomed** the report.

ITEM 8: SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022/23 – PROGRESS REPORT

- The paper reported progress with the school development plan. One action was marked Red - related to supporting reading.

Question: *Was the RAG rating scoring in respect of the completion of an action or its impact?* Depending upon the action, it could be either or both.

Question: *Were there enough milestones within the Amber rated actions to be able to show progress?* The team would reflect on what more could be included to evidence progress.

Action: Review Amber rated actions and consider introducing additional milestones.

Question: *How would the 'Attendance Contract' operate?* A meeting with the family would be held to agree what they could do to support higher levels of attendance. It would be another step to demonstrate that the school was doing everything it could to engage with the families of learners with lower attendance rates. A number of fixed penalties for unauthorised absence have been issued already.

Question: *Was there any merit in grading the RAG rating – eg by introducing more options such as pale red, light green etc?* Alternatively, the progress report could show the trend line.

- The TAA LGB endorsed the progress being made with the school development plan.

ITEM 9: P12 (AUGUST 2022) MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS REPORT

- The paper reported a better than budget year-end forecast and noted that the school could manage the unfunded element of this year's teachers' pay award (though the 5% offer had not yet been accepted). There was confidence that the supply of biomass fuel would be maintained, but some concern about increased cost; this would not be covered by the government's energy price guarantee. Cash not immediately required would be held in interest bearing accounts, with the accrued income covering the costs arising from the end of free banking.
- The year-end position permitted the school to begin to create a small operating reserve (c£45k) and it was also pleasing to note that the intercompany balance between TAA and Roebuck had been reduced to zero. There had been a small reduction in the year-end forecast since the previous Management accounts report because of the need to accrue holiday pay for some part-time staff (as a result of a Supreme Court decision – Harpur Trust v Brazel) - £10k - and increased estates work that took place over the summer.
- **The TAA LGB accepted** the report.

ITEM 10: TAA RISK REGISTER

- Since the meeting pack had been issued and to reflect the increased risk of industrial action in the education sector, and continuing uncertainty about future energy costs, a couple of risks had been added to the register:
 - Managing potential industrial action associated with the current teachers pay award.
 - Managing the increased cost of energy.
- **The TAA LGB endorsed** the latest iteration of the risk register.

ITEM 11: GOVERNOR UPDATES

- Five Governor visit reports had been included with the meeting pack, and governor feedback was greatly appreciated. Governors were reminded of the dates for forthcoming Governor in School sessions and encouraged to join at least a couple of these during the year. The remaining dates were:
 - Autumn 2: Tuesday 22 November 2022: Special Educational Needs
 - Spring 1: Friday 20 January 2023: Pupil Premium
 - Spring 2: Tuesday 14 March 2023: Sixth form and student leadership
 - Summer 1: Thursday 27 April 2023: Teaching and learning/professional development
 - Summer 2: Wednesday 14 June 2023: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- **The TAA LGB noted** the reports.

ITEM 12: POLICIES REVIEW

- Three Policies were provided for review at this meeting:
 - The proposed Admissions Policy for 2024/25, including sixth form admissions.
 - The Child Protection Policy.
 - The SEND Policy.
- The latter two included minor amendments only; the former had no proposed amendments and no consultation was suggested.
- In respect of the Admissions Policy for 2024/25, governors noted that it continued to provide for a priority admissions criterion for pupils of the Roebuck Academy. This provision had been the subject of a previous referral to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. The referral (by Hertfordshire County Council) had not been upheld. However, the criterion could be considered to unfairly disadvantage children who lived nearer to the school if a sufficient number were affected. At the time of the previous referral, only three pupils from Roebuck had been admitted as a consequence of the criterion and this was not a sufficiently large number to be unfair. In 2022/23, the number of admissions from Roebuck had risen to 10, and the school was full; the risk that a referral would be successful was therefore increased.

However, it was still not known whether this proportion (c5% of PAN) would be high enough to be considered unfair; other factors would also have to be considered; some of the Roebuck applicants lived fairly close to the school (within 1.6 miles) and might have succeeded on distance criterion alone.

- Governors agreed that the situation should continue to be monitored but that at this stage, the number of applications from Roebuck remained modest and it was felt that the criterion remained reasonable.
- **The TAA LGB approved** the proposed Admissions Policy for 2024/25.
- Minor updates had been made to the Child Protection and SEND policies, to ensure consistency in the case of the first with the latest edition of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Governors noted the greater emphasis on Domestic Abuse, recognising that a witness was a victim too, and the change in terminology for what was previously called 'peer on peer' abuse to 'child on child'. It was important to have consistent approaches for dealing with child on child incidents, to ensure that patterns of behaviour were not established early. There was also extra emphasis on LGBTQ concerns, highlighting that individuals might be targeted by other children.
- **The TAA LGB approved** the revised Child Protection and SEND policies.

Action: Publish the revised Child Protection and SEND policies on the TAA website.

ITEM 13: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

School Premises Accessibility

- A recent wheelchair using visitor to the school at an Open Evening had commented about the difficulty of accessing school buildings in a wheelchair. She had asked whether the school had considered what could be done to improve that position. There were currently no children who were wheelchair users attending the school, and no funding was understood to be available to support the level of adjustments that might be needed for much of the school's estate. However, it was important to assess what could be done and to make the school's communications about accessibility clearer. Had the school known about the individual's accessibility needs before the visit, more could have been done to enable access.

Action: Arrange visit to school with Business Manager to discuss how to improve the current position and to gain access to grant funding.

Pupil Premium Support

- Governors asked if there was more that they could do to support the school in closing the achievement gap. The Headteacher advised that the LGB should continue to press him and his team for progress and to make sure it was a focus in link governor meetings. Making staff aware it was important to governors would be a big help.

The White House

- A meeting with a Senior Estates Officer from Hertfordshire County Council had been arranged for Monday 31 October to discuss lease issues relating to the boundary between the Trust's estate and the White House, and to consider the boundary between the Trust's estate and an adjoining property in Olde Swann Court. A report would be provided after the meeting.

ITEM 14: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- The next meeting would take place on Thursday 1 December 2022, 18.00, starting at 18.00 by videoconference (Microsoft Teams).
- The meeting closed at 19.50.

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Signed – Chair of Governors

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Date

LOCAL GOVERNING BODY ACTION LOG

Meeting	Item	What	Who	When
05/05/22	2.	Provide diversity analysis for student and staff cohorts at TAA.	Mark Lewis	27/05/22
07/07/22	8.	Make arrangements for parent governor election.	Mark Lewis	30/09/22
13/10/22	2.	Issue reminder about returning 2022/23 Declarations of Interest.	Robert Dale	31/10/22
13/10/22	3.	Consider adjusting the Governor in School programme to incorporate governor suggestions.	Mark Lewis	31/10/22
13/10/22	3.	Reschedule one of the proposed sessions to an afternoon start time.	Mark Lewis	31/10/22
13/10/22	3.	Link staff to arrange meetings/contact with link governors.	Mark Lewis	30/11/22
13/10/22	6.	Issue reminder about Safeguarding training to the LGB.	Robert Dale	31/10/22
13/10/22	8.	Review Amber rated actions and consider introducing additional milestones.	Mark Lewis	30/11/22
13/10/22	12.	Publish the revised Child Protection and SEND policies on the TAA website.	Kate Prince	31/10/22
13/10/22	13.	Arrange visit to school with Business Manager to discuss how to improve the current position and to gain access to grant funding.	David Gray	30/11/22