



THE THOMAS ALLEYNE ACADEMY LOCAL GOVERNING BODY

A meeting of the Local Governing Body for the Thomas Alleyne Academy was held by teleconference (Microsoft Teams) on Tuesday 2 March 2021 starting at 18.00.

PRESENT

Jonathan Ellam (Chair)
Robert Baldock
Julia Cooke
Howard Crompton
Cate Ducati
David Gray

Mark Lewis (Headteacher)
Tara McGovern
Jo Mellett
Gary Phillips
Lynsey Steadman
Jenny White

IN ATTENDANCE

Melanie Cook (Deputy Headteacher)

Robert Dale (Clerk)

MEMBERSHIP

- The Chair announced that a new governor (Chloe Tayler) has been appointed, the Trust Board having confirmed the recommendation of the LGB at its meeting on 10 February. Chloe was unable to attend this meeting but will join the LGB at its next meetings.

ITEM 1A: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Chloe Tayler.

ITEM 1B: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- There were no additional declarations made.

ITEM 1C: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- Agreed and to be signed as an accurate record of proceedings in due course.

ITEM 1D: MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

- Actions had been followed-up as indicated below:
 - Consider the timing for an election of a parent governor at the next meeting. **Action deferred.** There are currently two parent governors (Robert Baldock and Jo Mellett). Tara McGovern reached the end of her first term of office at the end of August 2020, but because she no longer had children at the school, had been reappointed as a Trust governor. One vacancy for a parent governor existed. Other Governors whose terms of office ended in 2021 (all are eligible to stand again) were David Gray (November), Julia Cooke and Lynsey Steadman (August), Howard Crompton (August) and Jenny White (September). Jonathan Ellam had already announced his intention to step down, and Gary Phillips will also step down at the end of the academic year. A recruitment plan would be prepared to be shared at the next meeting.

- Prepare plan to attract a wider diversity of candidate to the local governing body. **Action deferred.** See note above.
- Prepare draft appointment letter and invite Trust Board to approve appointment. **Action complete.** Trust Board approved the appointment on 10 February and an appointment letter had been issued. References and necessary DBS checks were under way.
- Update Policies and add to the website as required. **Action under way.** Out of date policies identified by Robert Baldock during his website review were being updated. The Data Protection and Management Policy had been reviewed and approved by the Trust Board and is ready for adding to the website.
- Consider examples of diversity good practice identified through this review and develop plan to incorporate ideas in the Thomas Alleyne website. **Action under way.** This work would be picked up during the year.
- Re-issue questionnaire to governors yet to respond. **Action complete.** Governors had returned evaluation questionnaires and the Chair would review the responses and report to a future meeting.
- Inform the Trust board of the Chair's announcement and begin recruiting a replacement for September 2021. **Action under way.** A draft role description had been prepared and a number of recruitment opportunities were being pursued.
- Ensure updated policies were added to the school's website. **Action complete.** The Admissions Policy 2022/23, the Remote Learning and Relationships and Sex Education Policies had been added to the School website.

ITEM 2: HEADTEACHER'S PERFORMANCE REPORT

- Y7 allocations for 2021/22 had been confirmed as 180 (the maximum permitted) made up of 143 first choice applicants, 30 second choice, five third and two fourth. There was a waiting list of more than 40 including some first and second choice applicants who had not been allocated places. Of the 180 places, five had gone to pupils from Roebuck and 1 to the child of a member of staff. The first letter to parents advising them of the allocation had been posted encouraging them to confirm as soon as possible.
- The position for 2021/22 as a result of this allocation was very good and demonstrated the attractiveness of the school for local families. It was possible that some appeals would be submitted. The growth in applications from Roebuck families would need to be considered when reviewing the Admissions Policy for 2023/24.

Question: *How difficult was it providing to recruit teachers to replace those leaving?* It was challenging at present as few people were looking for new jobs at present. There was agency cover in place for the Business Studies post for the summer term.

Question: *When would the Mental Health hub start to operate?* Initial activity would start in the very near future. There would be capacity to work with two students to being with, but it was anticipated that this would grow over time.

Question: *How were the different tools used to manage behaviour online referenced in the Behaviour Policy?* They were referenced in the Online Learning Policy.

Question: *What were the capital projects which would potentially be picked up during the summer?* A range of large scale projects – which would only proceed if capital bids were successful – and smaller scale classroom refurbishment. A priority list of spaces for improvement had been developed. Governors noted the generous donation of fencing by North Hertfordshire College which would be used to better secure the school playing field adjacent to The Avenue over the summer. There was not enough to protect the whole of a very large perimeter, but sufficient to address the worst gaps in the fence line.

Question: *Would the school be open for lettings in the summer term?* In principle, if people could return safely, then yes, lettings could resume (and users were understood to be hoping to return); a prudent financial forecast was sensible at present, however.

- **Governors welcomed** the report.

ITEM 3: SCHOOL REOPENING ARRANGEMENTS.

- Governors were briefed about re-opening plans and arrangements for lateral flow testing. Processes and procedures would be similar to those successfully adopted during the autumn term. The main change related to government guidance over face coverings, which they had unhelpfully said would not be mandatory. Several parent emails had already been received on this subject – both for and against – and the school was expecting some non-compliance. A non-confrontational approach would be adopted and those persistently refusing to follow the guidance would be noted with follow up actions coordinated by the pastoral team.
- Similarly, the government's position on testing had confirmed that no sanctions could be applied to refusers; as far as possible, staff would work with parents to encourage compliance. After the first two weeks, tests would be issued for families to undertake them at home, but this could not be monitored. Families would be asked to inform the school if there were a positive result, but this could not be enforced. Further guidance from DfE was awaited.

Question: *What was the likelihood of false positives?* There were undoubtedly likely to be some false positive results but the school was following national guidance.

Question: *Were any staff reluctant to return?* Two staff were currently shielding and one of those had expressed significant concern about returning. Other staff were largely positive and had the experience of the autumn term to reassure them. Worries included dealing with disputes over face covering.

Question: *Were staff and students expected to register on the NHS app?* This was not a requirement; collecting data on positive tests would be managed in school with reporting times specified. Staff would be encouraged to register – but this could not be enforced.

Question: *Would the testing process be manageable without volunteer participation?* After the first two weeks, responsibility would devolve to families and the testing set up in the Hall would be dismantled – so that the school could get the Hall back into use.

- The re-opening risk assessment was currently being updated.

Action: Share updated re-opening risk assessment with LGB as soon as available.

- Governors thanked Mark and the team for the excellent and consistent communication with the school community, which had been clear, reassuring and supportive throughout the emergency period.

- Governors considered the latest guidance about summer assessment processes for Y11 and Y13. The major change from last year was that schools were being trusted to award grades fairly – but that these assessments also had to be supported by evidence. A robust in-school mechanism for gathering this evidence – which would need to differ by subject – was needed and curriculum leaders had been tasked with producing this for their area in the next couple of weeks. They would need to consider what assessments had already taken place, what were still required and how learner workload could be managed across their subjects to limit the risk of overload at pinch points. Moderation of assessments – internally if possible but externally if not – would also be expected. Plans would be reviewed on 16 March; having a clearly documented process would help the school to deal with appeals in the summer.

Question: *Had there been any student feedback about summer assessments?* A few families had raised some queries and these were being addressed. It was vital, however, that all Y11 and Y13 students understood how important the work they undertook during the coming weeks would be. There was a sense from staff, however, that the process had the potential to provide a more holistic basis for assessing achievement.

Question: *How far in advance would students know what activities and assessments would be used to influence their outcomes?* It was important that they understood that certain pieces of work or activities would count, but not that they knew the final grades. Conversations with Y13 would be managed by the head of sixth form as she had already been directly involved in students' UCAS applications.

Question: *When would the governors receive headline performance data?* This year's performance data was not being used to hold schools or individuals to account, but a report similar to the usual one would be provided in the autumn term, although the ability to benchmark would be extremely limited.

Question: *When would results be announced?* A bit earlier than usual – which had created issues for staff holiday plans. Schools were now expected to handle an appeals process against awards, but the dates for award announcements had not been decoupled from the UCAS process, which made it hard to understand why the shift in timing had occurred.

- **Governors accepted** the report.

ITEM 4: SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021 – UPDATE

- The School Development Plan (SDP) discussed with governors in the autumn term had been substantially overtaken by events; a new plan focussing on rebuilding after the end of the COVID-19 emergency and restating the school's role at the heart of the community would be drawn up after Easter. Governors noted that the Aim High agenda and themes would remain, although the emphasis in some areas might shift slightly. Some adjustments to senior team responsibilities would be made.

Question: How had the SLT reacted to the proposed adjustments? The overall view was that the alterations helped improve the coherence of some roles, and that change was beneficial – although individuals might not always want to give up some of their responsibilities to others. The proposals had not yet been launched with the wider staff community. This would happen after Easter in the context of the new SDP.

- **Governors welcomed** the concept of 'character' learning **and endorsed the overall direction proposed**, which appeared coherent, well-balanced and future focussed.

ITEM 5: TAA RISK REGISTER

- **Governors agreed** that a single register should be retained, including risks for both schools but filtered for presentation to individual schools.

Question: *What implications for the IT risk in the risk register arose from the recent infrastructure failure?* Work had been carried out to deal with the failure and this had effectively and fully mitigated the risk.

- **Governors accepted** the report.

ITEM 6: GOVERNOR UPDATES

- The Governors in School Day planned to take place on 9 March had been cancelled in view of the government's announcement that all students would return to school with effect from 8 March, and that lateral flow testing would need to be carried out in school during that week and the following week. Governors agreed that this was a sensible and necessary decision and noted that the next session would take place on 19 April.
- Link governors noted that contacts with their linked SLT member had continued during the first part of this term albeit these had been necessarily briefer given the other activities ongoing. A Summer 1 Link Governor discussion might consider the school development plan and reflect upon the school values.
- Governors noted that the double yellow lining of The Grange had been approved by the emergency services and was with councillors for final approval. It was expected that this work would be completed during the Easter break.
- Jenny White had attended a training webinar outlining things governors might look for to understand whether remote learning was being provided effectively; notes from this webinar would be shared with governors after the meeting. Her conclusion had been that the school had done more than enough to provide evidence of providing effective remote learning.

Action: Circulate webinar notes.

- **Governors welcomed** the reports.

ITEM 7: REVIEW OF POLICIES

- Four policies had been presented for review:
 - Pay Policy
 - Supporting Students with Medical Conditions.
 - Anti-bullying.
 - Child Protection.

Question: *Was the Pay Policy the same for both schools?* Yes, though each school would have its own version with local information included.

Question: *Could the review date for the Pay Policy be moved forward by twelve months?* Yes, this would be altered.

Question: *Was the Medical Conditions Policy working well at present?* Yes, there were no known issues or concerns about the application of the Policy. The school was seeking to strengthen links with local Educational Support for Medical Absence (ESMA) provision.

- David Gray had sent some detailed corrections and amendments on the Child Protection Policy which would be incorporated before publication.
- Governors also suggested that acronyms be spelled out in full on the first occasion they appeared in a document and that work be done to make the Policy formatting consistent.
- **Governors approved** the four Policies presented for review and approval.

Action: Make the amendments suggested by the LGB before publishing the Policies.

ITEM 8: PROPOSED 2020/21 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

- A proposed calendar of meetings and outline agenda schedule had been circulated. Governors approved the proposed frequency of meetings and expressed their support for continuing to hold a proportion of meetings virtually. It would be important to hold some local governing body meetings in school – such as the first one after the summer break – but on-line meetings had generally worked well and made it easier for some governors to take part more regularly.
- **Governors agreed** that proposed arrangements should be finalised in discussion between the Chair, the MD and the Clerk for presentation to the Board.

Action: Finalise meeting schedule for 2020/21 and issue meeting appointments to members.

ITEM 9: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

End of COVID-19 restrictions

- Governors asked how the end of the academic year should be marked, particularly for Y11 and Y13? The school SLT would consider what aspects of the arrangements made to address COVID-19 risks might be maintained in future – some had been observed to have benefits for normal school life.

Action: Report to the LGB on practices being retained after the end of COVID-19 restrictions, and on marking the end of the academic year.

ITEM 10: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- The next scheduled meeting would take place on Tuesday 4 May 2021, starting at 18.00 by videoconference (Microsoft Teams).
- The meeting closed at 19.35.

.....

Signed – Chair of Governors

.....

Date

LOCAL GOVERNING BODY ACTION LOG

Meeting	Item	What	Who	When
15/09/20	2.	Consider the timing for an election of a parent governor at the next meeting.	Chair	10/11/20
10/11/20	4.	Prepare plan to attract a wider diversity of candidate to the local governing body.	Jonathan Ellam/Robert Dale	10/01/21
19/01/21	7.	Consider examples of diversity good practice identified through this review and develop plan to incorporate ideas in the Thomas Alleyne website.	Mark Lewis	31/07/21
02/03/21	3.	Share updated re-opening risk assessment with LGB as soon as available.	Mark Lewis	31/03/21
02/03/21	6.	Circulate webinar notes	Robert Dale	31/03/21
02/03/21	7.	Make the amendments suggested by the LGB before publishing the Policies.	Robert Dale/Kate Prince	31/03/21
02/03/21	8.	Finalise meeting schedule for 2020/21 and issue meeting appointments to members.	Robert Dale/Mark Lewis	30/04/21
02/03/21	9.	Report to the LGB on practices being retained after the end of COVID-19 restrictions, and on marking the end of the academic year.	Mark Lewis	30/04/21