

Thomas Alleyne's High School, Uttoxeter

Minutes of a meeting of the governing body held in the school on Monday, 16 April 2018 at 4.00pm.

Present:

Mrs A Trenery (chair), Mrs S Brown, Mrs B Davies, Mr B Egerton, Mrs K Fisher, Mr P Hudson, Dr M Jary, Mr M Prescott, Mr P Taylor.

Mrs J Rudge (Headteacher)

Also in Attendance:

Mr T Brunt (Deputy Headteacher)

Mr A Storer (Business Manager)

Mr A Goodhead (Shadow Headteacher)

Mr R Sheldon (Clerk to the Governing Body)

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mrs P Curtis, Mr I Johnstone, Ms R Horry and Mr D Thomas.

Governor Training – Effective Governance:

Prior to the start of the formal meeting, a short training session was led by Mrs Rudge, headteacher, looking at effective governance and giving an opportunity to review the purpose of the governing body. As part of this, governors completed a skills audit whilst also focussing on the section from The Governor Handbook relating to the six key features of effective governance.

Following consideration and discussion of the six key features of effective governance, governors identified areas of strengths and weaknesses. The particular areas of governance that could be strengthened included:

- Role of the school governing body in the context of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust, including the need for a better understanding of the ULT vision.
- Links with parents and students.
- Succession planning within the governing body and a review of the process for electing parent governors.
- Understanding of EFA funding arrangements.

The headteacher thanked governors for their views around effective governance and confirmed that those areas to be strengthened would be incorporated into the School Improvement Plan. The headteacher also confirmed that the ULT Trustees were arranging for an external review of governance for all schools which would hopefully be undertaken before the end of the year.

The clerk thanked governors for completing the skills audit and confirmed that he would prepare a report based on the information received which, once completed, would further identify strengths and weaknesses of the governing body.

49. Welcome to New Governor:

The chair welcomed Mrs Karen Fisher to her first meeting of the governing body as staff governor and thanked her putting herself forward for the role.

50. Governing Body Matters:

- a) Membership Update – other than the appointment of Mrs Fisher as staff governor, there were no other membership changes to report.
- b) Appointment of Governors – governors were reminded that a vacancy remained for a co-opted governor and the chair reported that this matter had been considered at the recent meeting of the Steering committee. It had been recommended that Mr Mike Osborne-Town (who had previously been a governor at the school) be appointed as co-opted governor when his role as chief executive officer for the ULT expired at the end of April 2018.

It was resolved –

That governors fully support the appointment of Mr Osborne-Town as co-opted governor with effect from 1 May 2018.

- c) Register of Business Interests – the clerk confirmed that the register of business interests had now been updated to reflect the information received from governors.
- d) Declaration of Interests – there were no declarations of interest for items to be discussed at this meeting.

51. Chair – Report of Actions Taken:

That chair reported that it had not been necessary for her to act on behalf of the governing body between this and the last meeting.

52. Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2018 had been previously made available to governors via Office 365.

It was resolved –

That the minutes be received and approved as presented.

53. Matters Arising:

There were no matters to report.

54. Presentation – Computing and ICT:

Mr Cartwright, Head of Computing and ICT, was present for this item to give a report on the work being undertaken by the Computing and ICT Department. Governors were already aware from discussions at previous meetings of the need to improve performance in this area and Mr Cartwright focussed in particular on the support and intervention strategies that were now in place to bring about the required improvement. He also outlined other strategies in place for reliable assessment of computer science and ICT and referred in particular to work being undertaken with the Maths Department to better assess the Maths content of the computer science specification.

Discussion followed and governors raised several questions to help get a better understanding of the work being undertaken and the likely impact of intervention strategies on results.

It was resolved –

That Mr Cartwright be thanked for attending the meeting and for his presentation on the work being undertaken by the Computing and ICT Department.

55. Steering Committee:

Governors noted that a meeting of the Steering committee had been held on 7 March 2018 and a report of the meeting made available on Office 365.

It was resolved –

That the report of the Steering committee meeting be received and noted.

56. Managing and Resourcing Committee:

Minutes of a meeting of the Managing and Resourcing committee held on 6 March 2018 had been previously made available on Office 365.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting of the Managing and Resourcing committee be received and noted.

57. Learning and Standards Committee:

Minutes of a meeting of the Learning and Standards committee held on 6 February 2018 had been previously made available on Office 365.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting of the Learning and Standards committee be received and noted.

58. Reports of Governor Monitoring Visits:

The headteacher reminded governors that monitoring visits gave an opportunity for members of the Steering committee to meet with members of staff as appropriate and that feedback from those visits is received and considered by the committee as part of the SIP review. The importance of the monitoring visits was recognised, as was the need for all members of the governing body to be aware of them whilst recognising the confidentiality of the reports.

The headteacher further reported that following discussion with the chair of governors it was recommended that a brief Governor Visit Monitoring report should be prepared following any monitoring visit and the report then placed in the Steering committee folder on Office 365. This would make reports available to all governors should they wish to read them, and would provide a record of visits for Ofsted.

The reports need to be brief and not give confidential information like personal details or names of students. It was suggested that a template blank monitoring form be placed in a suitable section of Office 365 to be available for governors to use.

It was resolved –

That the process for completing reports following any monitoring visits undertaken be received and noted.

59. Staffordshire County Council Categorisation:

The headteacher circulated a letter recently received from Staffordshire County Council to confirm its current categorisation of the school and was delighted to confirm that the school had, for the first time, been categorised as ‘No Concerns’.

It was resolved –

That governors are pleased to note the categorisation of the school as ‘no concerns’ and request the headteacher to find out the percentage of Staffordshire schools that had received a similar judgement.

60. Review of Key Performance Indicators:

The chair of governors had completed the annual review of KPIs and a copy of her report had been previously made available on Office 365. The chair confirmed that the report helped to identify where further improvements were necessary and would be reviewed further when looking at the committee terms of reference.

Discussion followed and governors, whilst recognising the value of the KPI review, felt that the process should be reviewed to further improve the effectiveness of the KPI indicators.

It was resolved –

That the KPI review be received and noted, with thanks to the chair of governors, and that this matter be considered further following the planned review of governance.

61. Staffing Update:

The headteacher reported on a number of staffing issues, including in particular the following:

- ULT Chief Executive Officer – Trustees had agreed not to make an appointment following the recent interviews and were currently looking to appoint an interim chief executive officer for the summer term at least. The permanent post was to be re-advertised.
- ULT Chief Finance Officer – Mr Storer continued to take on this role alongside his role as business manager at Thomas Alleyne’s but the current arrangement was to cease on 31 May 2018. Trustees were currently advertising for the post of chief finance officer.
- Deputy headteacher – governors had been previously informed that Mr Brunt was resigning at the end of the summer term and, following recent interviews, Mrs Anne Maingay had been appointed as the new deputy headteacher.
- Headteacher Absence – Mrs Rudge informed governors that she would be absent from school with effect from 4 June 2018 to undergo an operation and would be

absent from school at least until the beginning of the autumn term. Arrangements to cover her absence had been discussed and approved by the Steering committee – Mr Brunt was to be appointed as acting headteacher with effect from 4 June 2018 and Mrs Maingay had agreed to take on her role as deputy headteacher also with effect from 4 June 2018.

- Other Staff Changes – details of other staff changes were outlined in the headteacher's report to governors.

It was resolved –

- i) That the staffing update be received and noted with thanks to Mr Brunt for agreeing to take on the role of acting headteacher during his last few months at the school.
- ii) That governors wish Mrs Rudge well for a full and speedy recovery following her operation.

62. ULT Update:

The following key documents had been previously made available on Office 365 to keep governors informed of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust:

- CEO Report (March 2018)
- ULT Vision and Values
- ULT Improvement Plan
- ULT 2017 Audit Report

It was resolved –

- i) That the ULT documents be received and noted but that governors request an update on any plans to improve the quality of the ULT website as indicated in the audit report.
- ii) That the chair be requested to raise this matter at the next meeting of the School Representation Board and the clerk to raise it at the next meeting of the Trust Board.

63. Swimming Pool:

The headteacher confirmed that the swimming pool remained closed whilst attempts continued to raise the £270K necessary to complete the required repairs. Mr Hudson also confirmed that meetings continued to be held involving both the Borough and County Councils regarding possible support for a contribution towards the cost or repairs and it was noted that the school still had possible access to S106 monies in the region of £110K although this money would not become available until the required number of houses had been built.

Discussion followed and a number of suggestions put forward for potentially raising funds to support the repair costs, including seeking a grant from Sport England.

It was resolved –

That governors continue to seek support from the County Council in particular to help fund the cost of repairing the swimming pool and that the headteacher also be requested to contact Sport England to request financial support.

64. Headteacher's Report:

The headteacher circulated a detailed report on the work and activities of the school and placed on record her thanks to Tiff Harris who had prepared the school data as detailed in the report, much of which had been discussed previously by the Learning and Standards committee. The headteacher referred in particular to the following issues:

- a) Leadership and Management Score Card
The headteacher reported that the score card had been reduced from 'excellent' to 'good' taking account of the recent issues experienced in school. Governors were assured that everything necessary would be done to return to an 'excellent' grade at the earliest opportunity.
- b) School Performance
The headteacher highlighted the strengths and weaknesses around school performance and outlined the various strategies that had been put in place to bring about required improvement as necessary. This included work being undertaken to narrow the gap for disadvantaged students.
- c) Sixth Form Applications for 2018 Entry
The headteacher reported that 169 sixth form applications had been received and that six of these were external to the school. The six external applicants would shortly be interviewed.
- d) Literacy and Numeracy
The headteacher was pleased to report that a Librarian had recently been appointed on a temporary contract and would add value to reading throughout the school.
- e) Strategic School Improvement Fund Bid
The headteacher was pleased to report that the bid had now been completed and, if successful, would give funding to provide the strategy and leadership required to build sustainable MFL hubs which will drive MFL networking opportunities, quality assurance and training to increase the participation and success rates for disadvantaged students.
- f) Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) Bids
The headteacher was delighted to report that the school had been successful in securing two CIF bids to fund the replacement of boilers and pipework throughout the school and for the replacement of the two dilapidated mobile blocks and Sports Pavilion. The value of the bids was £2.5million.
- g) Senior Staff Development
The headteacher reported that in view of the short and longer term changes to the leadership team, arrangements had been made for an externally facilitated high quality team development programme. 50% funding had been secured for this programme.
- h) Student Exclusions
The headteacher was disappointed to report that there had been a recent increase in the number of fixed term exclusions. This had given an opportunity for the leadership team to consider the effectiveness of fixed term exclusions and if they continued to serve their purpose. Alternative options to exclusions were also being considered and governors would be informed of any proposed changes.

It was resolved –

- i) That the headteacher be thanked for her detailed report and that it be received.
- ii) That governors welcome sixth form applications from external students but request that in addition to the interviews, contact should also be made with their current schools to ensure that there were no safeguarding issues to be mindful of.
- iii) That governors thank all concerned for their help in preparing the Strategic School Improvement Fund bid and look forward to what will hopefully be a successful outcome.
- iv) That governors place on record their thanks to all concerned in helping put the CIF bids together, with particular thanks to Mr Storer and Mr Mirams.

65. Safeguarding:

See confidential appendix (attached).

66. Evidence for KPIs:

The chair reported that the matters considered at this meeting met the following key performance indicators:

- KPI1 – governors ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
Evidenced through the training session held prior to the start of the formal meeting to look at effectiveness of the governing body. Strengths and weaknesses of the governing body were identified and areas requiring improvement would be included in the School Improvement Plan.
- KPI 2 – governors support and strengthen school leadership
Evidenced through Minute 61 and decisions taken by the governing body to secure school leadership during the absence of the headteacher.

KPI 4 – governors provide challenge and hold the headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and their behaviour and safety

Evidenced through Minute 64 and discussions around school performance as detailed in the headteacher's report 65, including a request for contact to be made with those schools attended by external applicants for sixth form admission. Minute 65 and the assurance sought from the headteacher that the school continued to meet all safeguarding requirements.

- KPI 8 – governors engage with stakeholders, including staff and parents
Evidenced through the training session and recognition of the need for improved engagement with students and parents. Also Minute 54 and the attendance of Mr Cartwright, Head of Computing and ICT, to give a presentation on the work of his department.

67. Any Other Business:

There were no other items of business to discuss but governors were reminded that their next meeting would be the last one to be chaired by Mrs Trenery.

68. Date of Next Meeting:

Governors noted that the next meeting of the full governing body would be held in the school on Monday, 25 June 2018 at 4.00pm – to be preceded by a training session at 3.30pm.

The meeting finished at 6.15pm.

Signed.....

Date.....