

Thomas Alleyne's High School, Uttoxeter

Minutes of a meeting of the governing body held in the school on Monday, 3 December 2018 at 4.00pm.

Present:

Mr M Prescott (chair), Mr M Cruddas, Mrs P Curtis, Mrs B Davies, Mrs K Fisher, Mr I Johnstone, Mr M Osborne-Town, Mr P Taylor.

Mrs J Rudge (Headteacher)

Also in Attendance:

Mrs A Maingay (Deputy Headteacher)

Mr A Storer (Business Manager)

Mr R Sheldon (Clerk to the Governing Body)

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mrs S Brown, Mr B Egerton, Ms R Horry, Mr P Hudson, Dr M Jary.

Governor Training – Governor Vision and Structure for Governor Development Plan

Prior to the start of the formal meeting, a short training session was led by Mr Prescott, chair of governors, with a focus on helping governors understand how to establish a clear vision for the school's governing body and then to consider solutions for the governing body to fulfil its strategic responsibilities. The core functions were identified and governors reminded that when looking at the vision it would be necessary to look at it in line with the ULT's vision and for the short, medium and long terms. The following two documents were circulated and governors informed that they would form the basis for future discussions:

- Thomas Alleyne's High School Vision 2016
- Uttoxeter Learning Trust – Vision, Values and Strategy (February 2018)

Discussion took place and it was agreed that copies of both documents should be forwarded to those governors not present and that further discussion around the vision would take place prior to the start of the next Managing and Resourcing and Learning and Standards committee meetings. Both meetings would start 10 minutes earlier to allow for this.

It was resolved –

That Mr Prescott be thanked for leading the training session.

106. Review of Governance:

Mr A Chell, National Leader of Governors, was present for this item and reminded governors that the trustees of the ULT had arranged for a governance review to be undertaken at each of its schools and that they were to be undertaken by him. He informed governors of the review process and the timeframe for completion. Information around the governing body was currently being collected and would form the basis of a subsequent report that would be shared with governors at a meeting to be held on 28 January 2019. The report would also be shared with trustees. As part of this process, governors were circulated with a couple of self-review documents, to complete as appropriate, to show their understanding of their role and the core functions of a governing body.

Discussion followed and the clerk was also requested to send the self-review documents to those governors not present at the meeting with a request for them to be completed and returned to Mr Chell by the end of the week.

It was resolved –

That Mr Chell be thanked for attending the meeting and outlining the governance review process and that governors look forward to receiving and discussing his report at the meeting to be held on 28 January 2019.

107. Governing Body Matters:

a) Membership Update

The clerk confirmed that there were no changes to the governing body membership. He further reported that governor appointments to the local governing body, with the exception of parent and staff governors, were made by the ULT Trust Board. However, the scheme of delegation enabled the governing body to recommend any appointments subject to formal approval by trustees.

b) Governor Vacancy

In line with the governing body's current constitution a vacancy remained and the headteacher reported that someone with an understanding of school finances would further enhance the expertise of the governing body. Discussion followed and Mr A Barton, a former governor, was put forward as a suitable person to be appointed.

It was resolved –

That the headteacher be requested to ask Mr Barton if he was willing to be re-appointed as a governor and, if so, that approval be sought from ULT trustees.

c) Attendance

Governors noted that Mr Alcock was again absent from the meeting and that apologies had not been received.

It was resolved –

That the chair be requested to speak with Mr Alcock to remind him of the importance of attending meetings and to ask if he wished to continue as a governor.

d) Register of Business Interests

The clerk confirmed that the business interests' register had been updated.

e) Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest for items to be discussed at this meeting.

108. Chair – Report of Actions Taken:

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

109. Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2018 had previously been made available to governors in Office 365.

It was resolved –

That the minutes be received and approved as presented.

110. Matter Arising:

Safeguarding (Governing Training)

The deputy headteacher confirmed that a further safeguarding update had been given, as agreed, prior to the start of the last meeting of the Learning and Standards committee. All governors were now aware of the updated safeguarding guidance.

111. Approval of revised 2018/2021 Three Year Budget Modeller:

Governors were reminded that a discussion had taken place at the last meeting regarding the need to revise the previously agreed 2018/2021 three year budget modeller due to the significant financial implications of the reduced number of students entering the school's sixth form against those originally anticipated. The revised three year budget model had been previously made available in Office 365 and the business manager outlined the key changes made. The changes had been considered in detail by the Managing and Resourcing committee before recommending the budget for approval.

Discussion followed and governors accepted the financial challenges to the school but also recognised the work being undertaken by all concerned to manage the budget. The role of the ULT trustees in managing finances on behalf of all schools was also discussed and governors felt it was important for them to be mindful of future decisions they may take i.e. CEO salary and top slicing, given the likely impact of this on individual school budgets.

Discussion also took place regarding the number of pupils in the schools and the wider community. The headteacher reported that a greater number of pupils were choosing not to attend any of the middle schools in Uttoxeter and it was therefore highly unlikely that they would look for a place at Thomas Alleyne's in the future. The headteacher further reported that admissions projections provided by the local authority were down on those previously provided. As such, marketing of the school remained a key priority.

It was resolved –

- i) That the revised 2018/2021 three year budget modeller be received and approved.
- ii) That governors remain confident that the budget can continue to be effectively managed but recognise the future challenges which would be kept under review.
- iii) That Mr Johnstone be requested to raise the concerns around future funding plans of ULT trustees at the next meeting of the School Representation Board.

112. Headteacher's Report:

The headteacher circulated a detailed report on the work and activities of the school and referred in particular to the following issues:

a) Leadership and Management Scorecard

The headteacher reported that the daily operation of the school had been downgraded to reflect a number of student behavioural issues but assured governors that these continued to be addressed as necessary. The biggest concern, however, remained the number on roll and student admissions.

b) GCSE Y11 Headlines November 2018

The report gave full details of current Y11 predictions based on October 2018 data capture. Governors noted and discussed in particular:

- Number of students entered for EBacc and the number of students studying a modern foreign language. The headteacher outlined current school practices to encourage students to study for a modern foreign language.
- A recent letter from the local authority had confirmed that the school remained in category 1 – no concern – but the declining trend in English results had been noted. Discussion took place regarding the strategies that had been put in place to bring about improvement.
- The gender gap between the attainment of girls and boys remained and the headteacher outlined work being undertaken by staff to better define a curriculum aimed at improving the boys' performance. In particular, ideas were being taken from the History Department, where the gap wasn't as great, to identify and generate improvement strategies.
- Staff continued to look at what could be done to make full use of pupil premium funding in supporting student outcomes.
- A team of 6 tutors was now in place to support disadvantaged students and progress was being kept under review to monitor the impact of this support.
- The performances of individual subject departments were listed and the least successful ones were highlighted. The headteacher reported on the intervention strategies that had been put in place to bring about improvement. Discussion took place in particular around the challenges set to improve the performance of Modern Foreign Languages and governors noted that some improvement was evident as a result of this.

c) Current Y10 Summary

Governors noted the current Y10 summary, including the average attainment and progress8 scores, which was based on the data capture taken in July 2010.

d) Post 16 Outcomes

Governors noted the summary of post 16 performance and the headteacher was disappointed to report that the data wasn't strong. An assurance was given however that, as reported at previous meetings, a whole school focus remained on improving post-16 achievement and recruitment. As part of this, regular meetings continued to be held with staff to identify and agree strategies to bring about improvement.

e) Psychology

Governors noted the Y13 predicted subject grades and the headteacher referred in particular to psychology which remained a popular course for students.

f) Staff CPD Programme

The deputy headteacher outlined the CPD programme for staff and referred in particular to work being undertaken around curriculum planning and revised schemes of learning.

- g) Learning Walks and Work Scrutiny
Governors noted that 109 SLT learning walks had already taken place this term and the headteacher confirmed that they helped SLT identify where support strategies may be necessary. Governors discussed the impact of the learning walks and recognised their impact in improving teaching and learning,
- h) Marketing
In view of the challenges to the school around the number of students on roll the headteacher confirmed that staff continued to focus on marketing strategies.
- i) School Site
The headteacher gave an update on progress of the various building projects and was also pleased to confirm that funds had now been identified to refurbish the swimming pool. A timeframe for the various projects was given and governors were also assured that plans had been put in place to ensure the health and safety of students whilst the work was undertaken.
- j) Student Attendance
The headteacher reported that student attendance figures were slightly lower than the previous year but that the school was working closely with the attendance officer to identify strategies for improving the attendance figures.

It was resolved –

- i) That the headteacher be thanked for her detailed report and that it be received.
- ii) That the headteacher be requested to revise the finance reporting line in the Leadership and Management scorecard to help make more clear any finance surplus or deficit.
- iii) That the October data capture be noted that the headteacher be requested to include an additional column in future reports to show the comparison with the previous year's data capture.
- iv) That the head of the English department be requested to attend the next meeting of the Learning and Standards committee to provide an update on the latest progress data for Y11 and y13 students.
- v) That governors request to receive a report at a future meeting to show the impact of the support given by the 6 tutors to disadvantaged students.
- vi) That the head of the Psychology department be requested to attend the next meeting of the Learning and Standards committee to discuss work being undertaken in that subject area and any actions being taken to improve student outcomes.
- vii) That the headteacher be requested to provide a report for the next meeting to show the impact of the support given by the attendance officer to improve student attendance figures.

113. ASP report/ISDR Presentation:

The headteacher reported that the ASP report and ISDR presentation were not yet available and would be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Learning and Standards committee.

114. Managing and Resourcing Committee:

Minutes of a meeting of the Managing and Resourcing committee held on 25 September 2018 had previously been made available in Office 365.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting of the Managing and Resourcing committee held on 25 September 2018 be received and noted.

115. Learning and Standards Committee:

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

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the Learning and Standards committee held on 6 November 2018 be received and noted.

116. Steering Committee:

Governors were informed that a recent meeting of the Steering committee had been held on 27 November 2018 and that the focus for the meeting had been the monitoring and review of the School Improvement Plan. It had been updated as appropriate and would be made available in Office 365.

It was resolved –

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

117. JCB Academy – Consultation on Admission Arrangements:

The headteacher reported that the JCB academy was currently consulting on a proposal to change its admission arrangements from 2020, which included a change to the age of admission and selection criteria. Governors were informed that, if approved, it would likely have significant implications for Thomas Alleyne's High School through reduced student numbers and associated finances. As such, the headteacher further reported that she was objecting strongly to the proposals and that this included sending letters of concern to both the Regional Schools Commission (RSC) and Department for Education (DfE). A request would also be made to meet with representatives from the RSC and DfE to discuss the risk implications through a likely reduction in school funding should the proposals be approved.

It was resolved –

- i) That governors fully support the letters sent from the headteacher to strongly object to proposals to change JCB academy admission arrangements and that a request also be made for a response to be received from JCB Academy.

- ii) That governors also fully support the letters of concern to be sent to the RSC and DfE but that the letters be amended to better reflect school finances through removal of the CIF funding which gave a distorted view of the school's financial situation.

118. ULT Code of Conduct:

Governors were circulated with a copy of the ULTs Code of Conduct for Members, Trustees and Local Governing Bodies. The headteacher reported that it was important for governors to be aware of the Code of conduct and to act in accordance with the Code.

It was resolved –

- i) That the ULT Code of Conduct be received and accepted.
- ii) That the clerk be requested to forward a copy of the Code of Conduct to all governors not present at the meeting and to request an acknowledgement by them that it had been read, and accepted.

119. Safeguarding:

The headteacher reported that safeguarding continued to be of key importance to the school but that there was nothing specific to report for this meeting.

120. ULT – School Representation Board:

Governors were reminded that they were represented at the School Representation Board by Mr Johnstone. For the next meeting he was requested to raise the current situation regarding the appointment of a CEO and to seek an update on the process and timeframe.

121. Other Business:

a) Governor Visit Forms

The headteacher reported that revised visit forms for members of the Steering committee to report on any school visits undertaken had been approved at their recent meeting. The headteacher also confirmed that other governors undertaking any school visits would continue to complete the existing reporting form.

b) School Categorisation

The headteacher was pleased to circulate a letter received from the local authority to confirm that the school had again been categorised as Category 1 – No Concern. However, the letter had also indicated that the declining trend in grades 9-5 English for FMS6 had been noted.

c) School Performance Tables

The headteacher reported that she had written to the DfE regarding the changes made to the listing of schools in the performance tables, to express concerns that the revised format did not reflect the school's success and that this could have an impact on the number of students considering joining the school. A copy of the reply to her letter was also made available, which indicated that the DfE was aware of the implications of the changes for some schools and were investigating options to remedy this.

It was resolved –

That governors welcome the response from the DfE.

122. Evidence for KPIs:

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

- KPI 1 – governors ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
Evidenced through the governor training session prior to the start of the formal meeting.
- KPI 3 – governors contribute to school’s self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses
Evidenced through discussions during consideration of the headteacher’s report and, in particular, requests for the English department and Psychology teacher to attend a future meeting of the Learning and Standards committee to provide an update on work being done to bring about improvement in student outcomes. (Minute 112)
- 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 discussions around school performance as detailed in the headteacher’s report. A request also for a report to be made available for the next meeting to demonstrate the impact of the support provided for disadvantaged students by the 6 tutors. (Minute 112).
- KPI 6 – governors ensure solvency and probity, and that financial resources are made available to the school and are managed effectively
Evidenced through discussion of the revised 2018/2021 three year budget modeller and subsequent approval. (Minute 111).
- KPI 7 – governors operate in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities approved
Evidenced through support given for the review of governance. (Minute 106).

123. Date of Next Meeting:

Governors noted that the next meeting of the governing body would be held in the school on Monday, 28 January 2019 at 5.00pm – to receive a report following the review of governance.

Governors also noted that the next formal meeting of the governing body would be held in the school on Monday, 4 March 2019 at 4.00pm. The meeting would, as usual, be preceded by a governor training session at 3.30pm.

M Prescott

Signed.....

4 March 2019

Date.....