

A meeting of the Hart Schools Trust (formerly the North Hertfordshire Studio Schools Trust) was held on Wednesday 10 October 2018, starting at 08.00, at the Thomas Alleyne Academy, Stevenage.

PRESENT

Andrew Simmons (Chair)
Kit Davies
Mark Lewis (Managing Director)
Stephen Marshman

Vicky Parsey
Gary Phillips
Jane Winterbone

IN ATTENDANCE

Mel Cook (Deputy Headteacher, the Thomas Alleyne Academy) – Items 2-4)
Paul Harte (Group Finance Director)

Lynsey Young (Headteacher, the Roebuck Academy) – Items 2-4)
Robert Dale (Company Secretary/Clerk)

WELCOME

- The Chair welcomed Lynsey Young and Mel Cook to the meeting who would report on results at Roebuck and TAA respectively in Items 3 and 4.

ITEM 1a: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Geoff Cleverdon and Jonathan Ellam.

ITEM 1b: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- The Chair reminded members that he continued to be a Trustee of another Multi-academy Trust (Herts for Learning). There were no other declarations.

ITEM 1c: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- Agreed as an accurate record and signed accordingly.

ITEM 1d: MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

- These had been addressed as follows:
- Prepare indicator tables for TAA and Roebuck for consideration during the second half of the autumn term, including measures to show value added and progress from baseline. **Action not yet due.** Work will be undertaken in the second half of this term.
- Include an agenda item on the developing careers and employability programmes in the autumn schedule. **Action complete.** On the draft agenda for the next meeting.
- Make enquiries from the local authority about their views in respect of primary school places in South Stevenage. **Action complete.** This was an issue for the 2018/19 intake year across the South Stevenage area as a whole. It was not yet clear whether this was a harbinger of a longer-term drop in need, but this was a real possibility and a new arrangement for the nursery was being implemented. The situation needed

further consideration including conversations with the local authority about addressing this challenge - eg changing the PAN for underperforming primary schools.

Action: Prepare paper on primary recruitment from 2019/20 and potential responses.

- Give feedback [to the Roebuck LGB] that the Trust Board was pleased with the progress made, and that more support for forecasting would be available next year. **Action complete.** The LGB was congratulated on the progress made at its meetings in July and September.
- Consider inviting senior students to make a presentation at a meeting next term. **Action under way.** To be considered for the next meeting.
- Add the draft Quality Handbook to the October agenda and invite Helen Russell to attend. **Action complete.** Deferred to the next agenda to accommodate discussion on school results.
- Invite Jane Winterbone to be the named Safeguarding Trustee on the Board. **Action outstanding.** Jane Winterbone had now agreed to accept the role and would be put in touch with the leads in each school.

Action: Notify school and Group DSPs that Jane Winterbone had agreed to act as Safeguarding Trustee for the Hart Schools Trust.

ITEM 2: GOVERNOR DECLARATIONS

- A new declaration of interests form had been circulated, together with an updated privacy notice for Governors which fulfilled obligations under the data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Members were asked either to complete and return a new Declaration of Interests form, or to send an email to the Clerk confirming that there had been no changes to their 2017/18 declaration.

Action: Complete and return the 2018/19 Declaration of Interests or confirm that there are no changes to the 2017/18 declaration.

ITEM 3: ROEBUCK RESULTS 2017/18

- Lynsey had prepared the paper that had been circulated to the Board and had also discussed the 2017/18 results and 2018/19 actions with the LGB. The ways in which progress and achievement was measured differed in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stages 1 and 2 (KS1 and 2). In almost all instances, however, the summer outcomes showed improvement – sometimes quite significant. This meant that the school was no longer at risk of being considered ‘coasting’. Y6 SATs results showed high attainers making excellent progress to reach ‘greater depth’ outcomes; this had helped improve progress outcomes overall.
- Trustees congratulated the school on substantial and rapid progress and asked:

Question: *Were the same Y6 teachers in post this year?* One was – the other had gone on maternity leave and was not expected to return soon. There was strong cover in place.

Question: *What lessons had been learned from the gap between teacher assessment and actual outcomes from Y6 SATs?* Teachers had been asked to reflect upon these results and to adopt a more prudent approach. Results across all areas of the school had been externally moderated, so there was a much clearer basis for assessing pupil performance this year.

Question: *What were the areas of achievement the head was most proud of?* Having a contented and energetic team focussed on high quality teaching and learning. Mark Lewis endorsed this, Lynsey had built a strong senior team who were supporting her leadership. She was making best use of the talents at her disposal and helping colleagues develop.

Question: *What was the top priority for 2018/19?* Continuing to raise teaching and learning quality, aiming for more outstanding teaching; and implementing the Singapore Maths scheme, with the aim of becoming the first advocate school in Hertfordshire. This was expected to raise Maths outcomes for Roebuck pupils entering secondary schools in two to three years time.

Question: *What benefits were the link with TAA bringing the school?* Apart from the help with 'back office' functions, there was support available to encourage high attainers, with student shadowing by secondary staff looking for opportunities to broaden their experiences, as well as joint subject meetings from which learning flowed both ways.

Question: *What more could the Board do to assist the school?* The biggest worry at present was the growing cohort of children with high needs for whom local authority funding was not being provided. There was an increasing number of children with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) who were not able to access the resources they needed – whether professional or financial. While SEND had not historically been a strength for the school, this had perforce improved because of the growing demand in mainstream schools. There were insufficient specialist places and local authority SEND officers would not specify the need for one-to-one support for children because there was no money available. Could the Trust explore ways in which existing resources might be stretched to assist the school? Vicky Parsey offered the advice and guidance from her network of primary SENcos and Jane Winterbone offered to review information from the Schools Forum to see if there were untapped resources. Could the school consider linking with the new teaching school?

Action: Governors to contact the school individually with the support suggested.

Action: Schedule a further discussion about SEND in the spring term.

Trustees thanked Lynsey and congratulated her staff and the local governing body on their hard work and excellent progress.

ITEM 4: THOMAS ALLEYNE RESULTS 2017/18

- Mel Cook reported on the paper circulated before the meeting and advised members that the Progress 8 score for the school had just been confirmed as -0.26. This showed further progress from the -0.44 achieved last year and was a significant outcome given that a large proportion of GCSEs taken this year were 'new'.
- Overall, the school could be pleased with the outcome, especially since it had considerably reduced the progress gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students and between boys and girls. The 'Pupil Premium First' approach had been a success.
- There had been strong performances in Maths and Sciences, but there were areas for improvement. For example, while English results overall were reasonable, there was room for improvement, and a number of the 'open element' subjects could do much better. Action plans were in place for all these areas.
- High prior attainers were not making as much progress as they could and raising aspirations was key. Poor pupil attendance correlated strongly with poor outcomes; a faster tiered response to absence had been implemented, with Y11 a key focus.

Question: *Was the school confident that the reduction in progress gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students could be maintained?* There was no reason to think that it could not.

Question: *Was the school confident that the need to cover the head of English would not overstrain the current SLT?* The team was conscious of the need to support each other, the departing head of English was acting very professionally to support the school before leaving.

- A-level results this year had been creditable from this cohort, which had been small and included a number of 'second chance' students from outside TAA. The school no longer accepted such candidates and future sixth-form cohorts were largely continuing TAA students. The average GCSE score on entry had gone up.
- The 2017/18 cohort had all gone on to their preferred destinations; most to university, and a number into employment or apprenticeship. This year's Y13s included a number of potential Oxbridge and Russell Group candidates.
- The partnership with Barnwell was vital for maintaining sixth form opportunities, but it was also essential to uphold an ethical approach to recruitment; students must be guided towards study programmes that were right for them.

Question: *How large was the Y12 cohort?* There were 42 students; slightly fewer than hoped. Building a sustainable sixth form remained a strategic challenge. The impact of improvement lower down the school was now feeding into the sixth form.

Question: *How could high prior attainers be stretched and encouraged?* Some excellent work had already been undertaken in STEM subjects; this would be extended into the Humanities.

Trustees thanked Mel and congratulated staff and governors on good progress in 2017/18.

ITEM 5: HST PERFORMANCE

- The bid for emergency funds (£90k) to cover some of the sewer and toilet work undertaken over the summer had been rejected, although the school did not have the correct ratio of toilets to students. Funds were not awarded unless schools would be forced to close their doors within 48 hours. The Board would be kept informed about expenditure during the year; there had been a projected in-year surplus,
- There was concern about gang behaviour in Stevenage, with an increase in knife crime possibly related to illegal drugs. Extra staff presence at the school gates at the end of the day had been put in place. Hertfordshire Police had set up a new team to help mitigate the problems.
- Mark Lewis would have to attend the inquest into the death of a pupil earlier in the year. Trustees were concerned that the level of support available for students with mental health worries was not keeping up with demand; the usual sources of help were overstretched and the school was reaching out to different private and charitable organisations that might be able to step in.
- Trustees discussed the structure of the senior leadership team and were willing to consider two Deputy Head roles, if the Headteacher thought that was appropriate. It was also important to consider succession planning and to develop potential leaders and specialists from within the school team if possible.
- The White House was now on the market; the sale would need to take account of the relationship of the building to the school premises.

Question: *Were there any concerns about the school's use of PET-XI last year?* This had been offered to a small group of students that would benefit and had been successful in giving them an additional qualification. It could not be used in Progress 8 calculations in future.

Question: *Staff at TAA had had to cope with a great deal in 2017/18. Trustees asked if the LGB could provide assurances that the Trust's duty of care to senior staff was being met?* The LGB Chair was aware of the stresses of the past year and had been very supportive. The matter would be kept under review.

- A London-based Trust had been given the Barclay school (together with three others across Hertfordshire). There was a second high-profile Trust seeking to promote a new secondary school in the town to open c2023. Both took a rigid disciplinarian approach and were very quick to exclude students they felt were not working with that ethos. This was likely to have a destabilising impact on other local secondary schools.
- Trustees agreed that it was essential to continue to show that TAA values and its inclusive approach worked; parents were less likely to consider alternatives if they were satisfied with what was in place – and that was very much the position at TAA.
- Discussions with Barnwell continued; it was working on its financial position.

ITEM 6: LOCAL GOVERNING BODY REPORTS

- Jonathan Ellam had provided a short written report as he was unable to attend this meeting. Stephen Marshman reported on the recent LGB meeting at Roebuck, highlighting the forthcoming need to recruit some new parent governors, with encouragement being offered to EYFS and KS1 parents to put their names forward.

ITEM 7: SLT APPRAISAL AND PRP DECISIONS (CONFIDENTIAL)

- Mark Lewis reported on proposals to reward the senior management team at the Trust, comprising the senior leaders at Roebuck and TAA. There was good evidence that performance targets had been achieved in all cases and both schools had made solid progress in 2017/18.
- **Trustees approved** the recommendations for the SLT, which would apply from 1 September 2018.
- Mark Lewis left the room while recommendations on his remuneration were discussed.
- Kit Davies commended Mark's leadership during the year, which had seen improved performance at both schools, the smooth 'on-boarding' of Roebuck and the appointment of a new headteacher there. The year had been difficult across the Group and Mark had been a very strong and supportive colleague. Comments from the two absent Board members were shared with the Board. These were supportive of the recommendations. Trustees felt that Mark Lewis had demonstrated a desire to learn, grow and develop, and had shown integrity and resilience. He was a strong leader who should be retained.
- **Trustees approved** the recommendations for the Managing Director, which would apply from 1 September 2018.

Action: Notify Group HR of the approved changes.

ITEM 8: REVIEW OF POLICIES

- The local authority (LA) proposed to consult on a technical change to admissions criteria affecting looked after children previously looked after abroad. The change was unlikely to have a material impact on Trust schools (given the small number of children likely to be in this position) and reflected a national policy.
- **Trustees agreed** that Trust schools should consult with parents on this matter, and would update its admissions policy in line with the proposed change in due course.
- The LA had drawn the Trust's attention to a recent determination made by the Office of the School Adjudicator (OSA) about an admissions criterion giving priority to primary pupils from a school within the same academy trust as the admitting secondary. The objections had failed on the facts (only a few pupils might be affected).
- However, the determination noted that admissions criteria must be "reasonable, clear and objective", and must not "disadvantage unfairly a child from a particular social group". It said that "*the chance of getting a place at the high school for a girl attending a feeder primary school other than Manor Fields may reduce. However, on the basis of the 2018 admission numbers this chance would have reduced by a small proportion and I do not think that this level of reduction makes the arrangements unfair*".
- In writing to the Trust about this determination, the LA stated that:

"Roebuck Academy is a significant distance from Thomas Alleyne (in terms of Stevenage itself), indeed it is the other side of town and pupils from Roebuck have not traditionally sought places or been allocated places at Thomas Alleyne. Many other primary and junior schools are much closer to Thomas Alleyne than Roebuck. None of the pupils applying for a place in 2018 and 2017 had Thomas Alleyne as their "nearest" school. As such, the future prioritisation of children from Roebuck may well disadvantage children living closer to Thomas Alleyne but not attending a school in the Hart Schools Trust".
- On that basis, it proposed to monitor admissions in 2019 and beyond and reserved the right to refer the criterion to the OSA if it felt that children were being disadvantaged.
- **Trustees agreed** not to consult on a change for 2020/21. They thought that the number of pupils seeking admission to the Thomas Alleyne Academy from Roebuck in the next few years was likely to be small; this might change when the first two form entry reached Y6; it was therefore right to keep the policy under review annually.

Action: Consult on the technical change to admissions criteria proposed by the LA.

ITEM 9: RISK REGISTER

- Trustees reviewed the current risk register and asked that the cashflow risk be highlighted. One governor commented that she could say from personal experience that the security culture was good, having been picked up immediately she arrived on site without a lanyard and badge and escorted to reception.

ITEM 10: TRUST DEVELOPMENT

- Apart from the matters covered in Item 5, Trustees noted a forthcoming meeting with the Regional Schools Commissioner in December; Vicky Parsey was meeting in November and would brief Mark Lewis afterwards.

- Jonathan Ellam was giving governance support to a local primary school that had lost its Chair and a large group of governors plus the headteacher recently.

ITEM 11: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Hart Learning Group

- Kit Davies advised the Trustees in confidence that the Group had been graded 'inadequate' for financial health in 2017/18, following a poor trading year affected by lower than expected growth in apprenticeship delivery, coupled with its existing debt burden. The Group had grown apprenticeship delivery, against the national trend, but had not hit ambitious business plan targets. The grading meant that a 'Notice to Improve' would be issued and published around the middle of November. This might attract negative media attention.
- There were no direct implications for the Trust, and as a Group Board member, Andrew Simmons understood how the Group was addressing the improvement. Three actions were being taken: (a) the sale of surplus land; (b) mitigation of revenue losses; (c) external support from the ESFA. The Group was forecasting a small deficit in 2018/19 and surpluses thereafter.

ITEM 12: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Wednesday 5 December 2018, **starting at 08.00**, at the Thomas Alleyne Academy, Stevenage.

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Signed as an accurate record: Chair

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Date

ACTION LOG

Date	Item	What	Who	When
23/05/18	3.	Prepare indicator tables for TAA and Roebuck for consideration during the second half of the autumn term, including measures to show value added and progress from baseline.	Mark Lewis	08/06/18
10/10/18	1d.	Prepare paper on primary recruitment from 2019/20 and potential responses.	Mark Lewis and Lynsey Young	18/01/19
10/10/18	1d.	Notify school and Group DSPs that Jane Winterbone had agreed to act as Safeguarding Trustee for the Hart Schools Trust.	Robert Dale	31/10/18
10/10/18	2.	Complete and return the 2018/19 Declaration of Interests or confirm that there are no changes to the 2017/18 declaration.	All Trustees	16/10/18
10/10/18	3.	Governors to contact the school individually with the support suggested.	Trustees	31/10/18
10/10/18	3.	Schedule a further discussion about SEND in the spring term.	Robert Dale	31/10/18
10/10/18	7.	Notify Group HR of the approved changes.	Robert Dale	12/10/18
10/10/18	8.	Consult on the technical change to admissions criteria proposed by the LA.	Headteachers	31/10/18