



ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

THOMAS TALLIS SCHOOL

**At a meeting of the Governing Board
on 13th December 2023**

**PART ONE – NON-CONFIDENTIAL
MINUTES**

These are the values and virtues and governors at Thomas Tallis apply when making ethical governance decisions:

Selflessness, Trust, Integrity, Wisdom, Objectivity, Kindness, Accountability, Justice, Openness, Service, Honesty, Courage, Leadership and Optimism.

GOVERNORS PARTICIPATING:

Emma Warren (EW)	Chair of Governors
Carolyn Roberts (CR)	Headteacher
Catherine Farrant (CF)	Vice-Chair of Governors – Meeting Chair
Charles Duckworth (CD)	Vice-Chair of Governors
Yingzhen Chang (YC)	
Michelle Dedman (MD)	
Mark Turner (MT)	
Gavin Williamson (GW)	
Kirsty Kollgaard (KK)	
Esther Talabi (ET)	
Dom Toms (DT)	
John Sabapathy (JS)	
Richard Graham (RG)	

Cheryl Campbell (CC) (Business Director) Associate Governor
Stephanie Shaldas (SS) (Deputy Headteacher) Associate Governor
Katherine Walsh (KW) (Deputy Headteacher) Associate Governor

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lucy Davies (LD), Royal Borough of Greenwich, Clerk to governors
Diana Weber (DW) EA to the headteacher

The meeting started at 9am.

1. DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS

Governors were reminded that they should declare any pecuniary or other interests in any agenda item and may need to withdraw from the meeting for that item. MT reported that he runs an education training company. There is no direct conflict of interest. KK reported that she is a private teacher and SEND Specialist working mainly with Early Years and Primary Schools. As such there is no direct conflict of interest. There were no other new declarations.

2. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Governors were welcomed to the meeting by Cath Farrant, who chaired the meeting.

Dom Toms was welcomed to the meeting as a potential new co-opted governor (see Item 3).

Apologies for absence had been received from Rhianne Muir.

3. GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERSHIP and PROCEDURES

Membership:

The clerk reported that Tom Challen had resigned as a co-opted governor.

Dom Toms introduced himself as the recently ordained deacon at St James Church Kidbrook. A pen portrait had been circulated to governors. He left the meeting while the governors considered his co-option. After a brief discussion the governing board unanimously agreed to the co-option of Dom Toms.

The board considered the re-appointments of Mark Turner as a Co-opted governor and Cheryl Campbell as an Associate governor. They left the meeting while the appointments were considered. Unanimously agreed.

The clerk reminded the board that a CEIG (Careers Education, Information and Guidance) Link governor will need to be appointed to replace Tom Challen. **Action Point:** Esther Talabi will consider the role, for confirmation at the next board meeting.

Procedures:

Governors discussed the new governance framework of twice-termly full governing board meetings during a trial period. Governors were keen to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for governance discussions. They recognised the important roles of the committee chairs. The new framework will be reviewed by a small working group of governors with the clerk to consider ways to refine the mechanism, which could include delegation of review of the non-statutory policies to a small group of governors. **Action Point:** Report at the next board meeting.

Governors agreed to hold two Saturday strategy sessions during the academic year; SEND and Financial Challenges in spring term and Governor Self-Review and Development in the Summer Term.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

Minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2023 including the Confidential Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising:

Actions had been completed. DW reported that the Companies House check for one governor needed to be done, pending receipt of the Register of Business Interests form. Governors were reminded that they should read the 2023 version of Keeping Children Safe in Education and email DW to confirm. **Action Point.**

The chair will draft a Governance Impact Statement for the 2022.23 academic year and circulate to governors. **Action Point.**

Headteacher Recruitment – EW reported that the recruitment process is on track, with professional support from ASCL (Association for School & College Leaders). Governors thanked the Business Director and HR manager for their support. Governors had met with stakeholders including staff and parents. Key points from stakeholders included a desire to maintain the inclusive and expansive ethos of the school and a value of the strengths of strong communications and successes in Arts. **Action Point:** Pupil voice through Tallis Jury will be sought on the types of questions to ask a candidate for the headteacher post.

Two governors had undertaken Safer Recruitment training, and CF would also do the training.

5. TALLIS JURY

Report received and noted. It was recognised that the Jury mechanism is helpful insight to a diverse range of views which are helpful to inform improvements. The process includes a mechanism to feedback to Tallis Jury from school leaders. Now that the process is embedded it is possible to repeat previous jury questions to understand the impact of progress made.

6. DEFICIT RECOVERY GROUP

See Confidential Minutes. A confidential paper was tabled which set out the forecasted budget position for the next two years and CD reported to the board on the work of the Deficit Recovery Group to aim to set a balanced budget in future years. The DRG commissioned a report by an external financial consultancy and are continuing to meet to discuss the findings. Budget pressures linked to high numbers of students with SEND and unfunded pay rises impact the financial position of the school, as well as PFI (Private Finance Initiative – G4S) costs. It was recognised that school funding issues is a national problem.

7. LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT ITEMS

Chaired by RG.

7.1 Assessment / Outcomes Data

Year 11 data report received incorporating Autumn Predictions and Key Actions, including Maths and Science. Governors commented on the Most Likely Outcome prediction of -0.2 overall with 63.5% of students on track. **Is this likely to change?** KW reported that

mock exams will provide an indication. The level of students with SEND will impact outcomes for this cohort. Calculations are being developed to show the likely impact and these will be available in January.

A governor asked what the key areas for focus in Year 11 are. Maths. Directors have met with teaching teams and created challenges for More Able children. Action plans are in place. **A governor asked what the key element of plans is to focus on Maths.** The composition of the lower sets and 'U' grade and top grades students are being targeted.

A governor asked whether passive disengagement is a factor. Confirmed; there is also a negative impact from poor attendance. Teachers have been asked to develop strategies to tackle passive disengagement and children are being challenged.

A governor asked whether children at Tallis the same amount of time have allocated to Maths as other schools. Yes, in Year 11. Possibly less in Key Stage 3 because of the strong focus on delivering a broad curriculum.

A governor visit to Maths took place in Autumn 1. **Action Point:** Follow up visit to take place.

7.2 Curriculum Plan

Received. **Governors asked about current levels of engagement with homework.** KW reported that actions are being embedded with staff through use of the BROM COM system and by the next report to governors, it will be possible to report on the effectiveness of homework processes.

A governor asked about the status of plans to set in Maths. KW reported that a Deep Dive to Maths will take place and this will facilitate discussions about setting. A trial top set in Year 11 is taking place and conversations will be continued. **A governor asked how inclusion will be assured in decisions about setting.** KW indicated that leaders are conscious of the need to consider inclusive practices. Decisions are taken carefully about whether to set and how to manage it.

7.3 Pupil Premium Report

The Pupil Premium Strategy using the DfE Template is published on the school website and governors are aware of how funds are allocated and their impact. **A governor commented that the Improvement Partner report mentions the Pupil Premium gap and wondered about the impact of a possible intersection of SEND with Pupil Premium.** **Action Point:** Report at the next meeting to show the impact on outcomes if the SEND cohort is removed from data. CR reported that Pupil Premium children are doing better than the national average.

A governor asked whether target grades are shared with children. KW reported that leaders and teachers use the target grade data, but they are not shared with children as it's established that this would not help them to achieve their potential.

Action Point: GW to undertake a visit on Pupil Premium.

7.4 Year 7 Transition Report

Governors commented on the level of challenge linked to high numbers of children who have SEND in this cohort. Governors appreciated the report and commented that there are many activities in place to help children settle in well. KW will be responsible for Key Stage 3. **Action Point:** CR to produce a brief report for governors on the impact of the activities to support transition into Year 7, email to governors.

7.5 Improvement Partner Report

Received and noted. Governors recognised the value of receiving this report, as external verification of evidence.

7.6 Tallis Praxis Handbook

Received and noted. English Faculty Handbook also received. It was reported that other faculties are producing Handbooks.

7.7 Policies

Display for Learning - approved.

Examination Contingency Plan & Policy – approved.

Assessment & Feedback – approved.

This is a new policy and replaces Marking and Feedback. KW reported that there is a reduced focus on marking books at home to more active feedback in the classroom, including whole-class feedback and individual conversations. Tallis Jury had indicated that they were not so keen on whole-class feedback but that they were getting improved feedback. This will prompt conversations with the student population about what forms feedback can take. **A governor commented on the importance of the theme of student disengagement when working on feedback methods.** KW reported that the feedback methods are developed with student engagement in mind.

Action Point: Governors asked for the assessment framework to be referenced in the Assessment & Feedback policy, including the rationale for using NFER assessments.

Exceptional Learner Policy – approved.

Public Examination Entry Policy – approved.

8. RESOURCES COMMITTEE ITEMS

Chaired by Gavin Williamson

8.1 Budget Monitoring Report

Received and noted. Numbers on roll total 2104 which is a reduction of 19 on 2022.

CC reported that pay awards are included. Support staff pay awards of £2,230 are unfunded.

A governor asked how lettings are managed. They are managed in-house. Costs have increased, but income from lettings has also increased. A charge is paid to the PFI for the lettings and discussions are taking place about the PFI reducing their charges on lettings. The PFI contract is with the local authority which means that there is little or no room for negotiation. It is hoped the lettings income will increase. Governors extended thanks to Vanessa Cummins for her work on developing the portfolio of lettings.

The current budget shows a carry forward at the end of the financial year of £460k.

The Capital Budget funding is being allocated for the purchase of IT equipment.

A governor asked about the budget line of £200k which had been allocated to Bank Interest. CC reported that budget scrutiny had shown a discrepancy of £200k which had been repaid by the local authority, which the local authority decided to allocate to a Bank Interest budget line.

A governor asked whether the school should ask for interest to be paid on balances held on behalf of the school by the local authority. Action Point: Further discussion at the DRG.

A governor asked whether the IT spending strategy reflects a five-year plan. EW reported that the PTFA chair has expertise in allocation of IT funding and could offer a free IT consultancy. **Action Point:** EW to make contact.

A governor asked about the Number on Roll difference between Year 12 and Year 13. 26 students did not move up. CR reported that if students are not making progress or attending, conversations are held about them moving on. Around 50% of these students move on voluntarily or through exclusion. Some repeat Year 12. **Action Point:** CR to analyse the numbers Year 12 – Year 13 and report to governors.

8.2 Annual Review of Emergency Planning Document

Report received. CC reported that the school has its own Emergency Planning Document. It is distinct from the G4S plan, which is out of date. Governors commented that it would be helpful for the G4S plan to be updated. **Action Point:** Governor to contact G4S to request a timescale for an up-to-date plan. **A governor asked who holds copies of the plan.** Key personnel hold both paper and scanned copies.

8.3 HR Report including sickness absence, CPD, Recruitment Retention and Staff Wellbeing

Report received and noted. **A governor commented that sickness absence rates are lower than local authority rates and that more Occupational Health referrals have been made since the last report. What is the reason?** CC reported that absence rates linked to Covid have fallen as staff no longer test. The rate of long-term sickness absence has fallen. Governors acknowledged the link between sickness absence levels and staff well-being. **Governors asked for the next report to show a**

breakdown between teachers and support staff as well as rates for long-term sickness absence and a brief analysis of any trends. Action Point.

Discussing recruitment, it was reported that a new process has been initiated when any new posts are created, which requires the Chair of Governors to approve the recruitment. When staff leave they are being replaced. **A governor asked about trends in reasons for staff leaving.** Reasons are mainly due to career progression, moving away or leaving teaching.

A governor asked why agency staff are covering in reception and admin. There are four members of agency staff. CC reported that the staff begin the role as agency as a trial before being recruited permanently.

8.5. Premises and Health & Safety Report

Report received and noted. Governors commented that three new regular lettings are in place. A question has been raised with the local authority about the legal requirements if space is let for private parties.

G4S staff have moved on and been replaced by G4S.

The Damages appendix was noted.

8.6 Trips and Visits

Report received and the future Residential Visits included in the report were approved. **Action Point:** Correction to the report - Yorkshire trip to be changed to “no” for paying.

A governor asked whether comprehensive Risk Assessments had been carried out. Confirmed.

A governor asked about the proportionally lower number of trips undertaken by Year 10 and 11 students. It was reported that the aspiration is to achieve an equitable range of trips across all year groups.

8.7 ICT Strategy Report

Received and noted. **A governor asked what has changed on the IT strategy.** CC reported that the infrastructure is being assessed. It is an interim strategy rather than a long-term plan. **Action Point:** IT Strategy to be considered as part of the board strategy day.

8.8 PFI Update Report

Received and noted. Governors were pleased to see the levels of claw-back on payments to the PFI - £75k. They recognised the amount of work from the Business Director and team in efforts to improve service through the PFI and hoped that the local authority would support with challenging. **A governor commented asked about the two rooms that are declared as unavailable.** CC reported that they are declared unusable, but sometimes can be made available, for example if heating is not working temporarily.

8.7 Verbal Report from the Pay Committee

The Chair of the Pay Committee reported that the committee had met, discussed and agreed pay progression linked to performance through a thorough challenge of the Performance Management processes and discussion of anonymised examples.

8.8 Pupil Premium

The board approved the allocation of funding to the areas identified in the Pupil Premium Strategy. Impact is measured through the strategic documentation and challenged through discussions on Learning & Achievement.

8.9 Policies for Approval

Car Park Permit – approved.

Car Parking and Vehicle Access – approved.

Ethical Leadership Policy – approved.

Online Safety Policy – including Acceptable Use – approved. Governors asked for the policy to be amended so that it is fully aligned with the Mobile Phone usage policy. **Action Point.**

9. INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Chaired by Mark Turner and Kirsty Kollgard.

9.1 SEND Information Report

Noted that the SEND Information Report is published on the school website. **Action Point:** KK to review, ensure up to date and report back at the next meeting.

9.2 Annual Safeguarding Report

Received and noted. Governors have undertaken training in their role in Safeguarding.

Action Point: Children in our Care report to be presented at the next meeting. Clerk to provide a template.

9.3. Inclusion Report

Governors had received the Inclusion Plan, Attendance and Behaviour Reports and PREVENT report.

Governors noted the actions in place to support the students with SEND and asked for a brief verbal report on student engagement in plans. SS reported that the students meet regularly with staff to discuss provision, and plan and deliver celebrations such as PSHE-focussed assemblies, to raise awareness of SEND.

A governor asked how the impact of the Inclusion Plan will be measured. SS reported that a RAG rating system will be used and a full update given at the next meeting to report on the progress of the ambitious plan.

A governor commented that 90% of students in SCALI attend mainstream lessons, how are they doing? SS reported that additional support is in place to enable students to attend mainstream classes. **A governor asked whether the 90% rate is**

sustainable. SS reported that it comes with challenges and is an aspirational target which relies on support from Learning Support Assistants.

A governor asked about Attendance. Included in the report. Current rate is 90.1% in Year 7 – Year 11. **Action Point:** Attendance to be included as a specific agenda item at future meetings. **A governor asked whether Persistent Absence rates are improving.** Yes, and it remains slightly above the national average rate. **A governor asked about attendance rates at TOFFS (Tallis Offers A Fresh Start).** It is below target and systems are being put in place to support improved attendance. **Action Point:** A governor will visit TOFFS, and a discussion of attendance processes will be included as part of the visit.

It was noted that there were three referrals for PREVENT in the last year. PREVENT training has been updated and all staff undergo training.

Discussing Behaviour, **a governor commented that the disproportionate number of negative behaviour points is somewhat disappointing.** SS reported that training for staff will take place on how to respond to racist behaviour. Discussions are taking place about possibly moving away from the Behaviour Points system.

Discussing suspensions, it was noted that there is a higher rate of suspensions amongst the SEN and Pupil Premium cohorts. **Action Point:** Governor visit to monitor SEND suspensions and adaptive teaching.

9.7 Tallis Offers a Fresh Start Report

Received and noted. Governors commented that they were pleased to see that two students are reintegrating. They were pleased to note that a broad curriculum is offered at TOFFS.

9.8 Personal Development and Co-Curriculum Report

Received and noted.

9.10 Policies

Admissions Arrangements – approved.

Children Looked After / Previously Looked After – approved.

Exclusions – approved. **Action Point:** Remove some duplication (typo). SS reported that the Exclusions and Behaviour Policies have been separated and the Behaviour Policy will be updated.

Harmful and Abusive Behaviour Policy – approved.

Online Safety – approved.

Post -16 Attendance – approved.

Post 16 Behaviour – approved.

Post 16 Course Change – approved.

Approved 9/2/24

PSHCE – approved, subject to amendment to removing old dates from the curriculum plan and correcting a typo on P5.

SMSC – approved, subject to removing references to 2018/19 Ofsted definitions.

SEND - approved, subject to removing staff names where training is referenced and checking links.

10. LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Leadership Report in the form of School 2023 – 24 Strategic Headlines, RAG rated. Update received and noted.

11. GOVERNOR VISITS

Governor visits linked to strategic and identified areas as well as compliance monitoring visits are included in the governance workplan. See Action Points.

12. CHAIRS REPORT

CF reported that she had attended a meeting of the Greenwich School Community Partnership, already reported.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

15. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Part of the discussions on the Deficit Recovery Group Paper was deemed to be confidential.

See Confidential Minutes.

The meeting ended at 12:05 pm.

Action Points:

1.	Esther Talabi will consider the Careers Governor role, for confirmation at the next board meeting.	ET
2.	Small working group of governors with the clerk to consider ways to refine the mechanism, which could include delegation review of the non-statutory policies to a small group of governors. Report at the next meeting.	Clerk/ govs
3.	Governors were reminded that they should read the 2023 version of Keeping Children Safe in Education and email DW to confirm.	Govs
4.	The chair will draft a Governance Impact Statement for the 2022.23 academic year and circulate to governors.	EW
5.	Pupil voice through Tallis Jury will be sought on the types of questions to ask a candidate for the headteacher post.	EW/CR
6.	Report at the next meeting to show the impact on outcomes if the SEND cohort is removed from the Pupil Premium outcomes data. (Improvement Partner Report Data Set).	CR
7.	CR to produce a brief report for governors on the impact of the activities to support transition into Year 7, email to governors.	CR
8.	Could interest to be paid on balances held on behalf of the school by the local authority – explore at DRG.	DRG
9.	EW to make contact with PTFA Chair ref IT consultancy report.	EW
10.	CR to analyse the numbers of students Year 12 – Year 13 and report to governors on the difference.	CR
11.	Governor to contact G4S to request a timescale for an up-to-date Emergency plan.	GW
12.	Governors asked for the next HR report to show a breakdown between teachers and support staff as well ask rates for long-term sickness absence and a brief analysis of any trends.	CC/ TM
13.	IT Strategy to be considered as part of the board strategy day.	Chair
14.	Children in our Care report to be presented at the next meeting. Clerk to provide a template.	Clerk/ FK
15.	Attendance to be included as a specific agenda item at future meetings.	Clerk
16.	<p>Policies:</p> <p>Assessment & Feedback - assessment framework to be referenced in the policy, including the rationale for using NFER assessments.</p> <p>Online Safety Policy - to be amended so that it is fully aligned with the Mobile Phone usage policy.</p> <p>SEND Information Report - KK to review, ensure up to date and report back at the next meeting.</p> <p>Exclusions - Remove some duplication (typo).</p> <p>PSHCE - remove old dates from the curriculum plan and correct a typo on P5 (truncated sentence).</p> <p>SMSC –remove references to 2018/19 Ofsted definitions.</p>	School

	SEND – remove staff names where training is referenced and checking links.	
17.	Governor Visits: Follow up visit to Maths. GW to undertake a visit on Pupil Premium. TOFFS, to include a discussion of attendance processes will be included as part of the visit. SEND suspensions and adaptive teaching.	Govs