

Minutes of the Esher College Corporation
held on Tuesday 23rd September 2008

* Present

* Mr Terry Price (Chair)

* Mr Keith Blackwell	Mr Paul Monaghan
* Mrs Robyn Ross	Mr Jack Gregson
Mr Andrew Denley	* Mr Michael Kemsley
* Dr Anne Grant	Cllr David Lowe
* Cllr Peter Hickman	Mrs Carole Ann Roycroft
* Mr Chris Johnson	* Mr Michael Butlin
* Mrs Laura Coughtrie	* Ms Joanne Canessa
* Mr David Lavarack	* Mrs Pam Whyman
* Mr Pele Ling	* Dr Clarissa Wilks

In attendance: Mrs Sue Gunter: Clerk to the Corporation
Mr Dan Dean (Deputy Principal) Advising Officer

Part I

The Chair welcomed Jo Canessa to her first Corporation meeting.

1. PRESENTATION ON EXAMINATION RESULTS 2007-08 (Emma Young)

Emma Young's detailed paper on the examination results had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting, and she summarised the main points of the report, inviting questions from governors. She began by saying that it had been another fantastic year for results with the College achieving a pass rate of over 99% at **A Level**. Some departments had done particularly well, although it was disappointing that the number of AB grades had dipped slightly, as had the number of A grades which were below the national average for the year. In response to governors' questions, she confirmed that this had been a difficult cohort and these results followed a dip in the previous years AS results.

The results at **AS Level**, however, had really improved with an increase in the overall pass rate but an even more pleasing significant increase in the AB pass rate which was now well above the national average.

The **Applied A Level** courses had once again had an outstanding year with results well in excess of national benchmarks.

Again, there was significant improvement in the results for **extension studies**, although there was still room for improvement. This year a wider range of courses is being provided for second year students which are more tailored to student need. **GCSE** grades were better than last year, with all subjects improving their A*-C grades. **Value Added** continued to be strong, although the College's ALIS value added data had produced some interesting trends in certain departments which were now being investigated by Divisional Directors. In response to questions from

governors, Emma Young briefly outlined some of the factors involved in calculating Value Added, and confirmed that it was harder to add value to high achieving students at entry. She agreed that value added to lower achieving students might be comparatively high and that Keith Blackwell was doing some analysis of this area. Clarissa Wilks felt that the College should celebrate these results in the context of their policy of taking students from across the ability range. Michael Butlin was concerned about the low take-up and low performance in IT and Keith Blackwell advised that this reflected the national trend. Some other apparently low achievements were identified in different subjects and governors felt that it would help to give a fuller understanding of the results if the national averages were shown alongside the College results in each table of statistics. This was agreed.

Action: Emma Young to include national comparative figures in next year's report.

There remained concerns about the marking of exam papers in a number of subjects. The College had now had a total of 104 re-marks which had resulted in 25 grade increases.

Finally, Emma Young circulated an addendum, which showed that five students had achieved results in the top ten by subject in the country. This included two students who had each scored twice in the top ten and two top marks for Art at AS level. Governors agreed that this was an exceptional achievement and congratulated all involved. It was felt that the Corporation should congratulate these students individually.

Action: The Chair to write to the students congratulating them.

2. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The Chair asked if anyone had any interests to declare with regard to the agenda of the meeting. None were declared.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Andrew Denley, Carole Ann Roycroft, David Lowe, Paul Monaghan, Jack Gregson.

4. CONSTITUTION

Confirmation of Chair

The Clerk explained that Terry Price was elected as Chair in September 2006 for a period of three years, and his third year was confirmed unanimously.

Election of new Vice Chair.

The Clerk advised that no nominations for the post of vice-chair had been received by the deadline of noon on Thursday 18th September. The deadline had therefore been extended to 1pm on Tuesday 23rd September and governors had been invited to reconsider whether they would happy to be nominated. Two nominations had been received by the revised deadline. These were from Chris Johnson and Mike Kemsley. Under the previously agreed rules there would need to be a secret ballot, and this would be arranged in the same way that parent governor ballots are organised. Both candidates would be asked to provide a brief statement in support of their nomination and these would be circulated to governors with ballot papers. Andrew Denley's term of office does not expire until 1st November, which provides sufficient time for this process to be carried out.

Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk to arrange a secret ballot for the post of Vice Chair.

External Governor Vacancy

The Clerk explained that there had been discussions about how best to identify a new governor with appropriate skills. Both audit and marketing had been identified as skills gaps, but it was clear that audit was the more important of these two at this stage. Andrew Denley had been asked if he could recommend anyone from Menzies, but unfortunately this approach had been unsuccessful. It was agreed that experience in audit was required but this did not have to be current. It was agreed that local firms should be contacted, as well as professional bodies. If this approach did not work, then an advertisement would need to be placed, possibly in specialist accountancy or financial press, subject to the cost being acceptable.

Action: Clerk to approach local firms and professional bodies in the first instance to recruit a governor with audit skills. If this was not successful, to advertise.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

These were agreed as a true record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

- **Item 1 Presentation** Clarissa Wilks confirmed that she had received the full literacy report.
- **Item 4 Constitution: External Governor Vacancy** had been dealt with above.
- **Item 10 Risk Management** An item on governors' responsibilities with regard to Risk Management is included in the draft QUIP.
- **Item 18 Student Council** Pele Ling would be making a presentation to this meeting under "Student items".
- **Item 19 Date of Management Away Day** to be advised as soon as it agreed.

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Funding and enrolment 2007-08

Keith Blackwell referred governors to the statistics on enrolment which had been circulated with the agenda. The reconciliation sheet showed a very positive position with actual funding at 102.4% of target. This must be ratified by the LSC.

The enumeration figure of 1584 represented the position immediately post enrolment. This had now dropped to 1560 and was likely to settle at around 1550 by the first formal enumeration day on 13th October. The College was funded for 1505 students, based on historic figures, and would not receive additional funding within the current year for any additional students. The enrolment process itself had gone very smoothly with a good match of students to subject with only a small number not getting their first choice.

There was a discussion on the optimum size for the College. Keith Blackwell confirmed that funding would be provided for 1550 next year if we again wanted to accommodate that number of students. However, there was concern that this figure might be too high, resulting in larger class sizes and other stress points through the College. Although Keith Blackwell said that maximum class sizes were in general lower than other S7 Colleges he agreed with Clarissa Wilks' suggestion that it was important to do some detailed work to analyse how increased numbers affected life across the College in terms ranging from marking loads to general atmosphere. Keith Blackwell confirmed that there was no limit on numbers in local planning terms.

Action: Keith Blackwell to consider the effect of increased numbers across the spectrum of College life.

Review Development Plan

Keith Blackwell referred governors to the extract from the College Quality Improvement Plan which gave an update on student achievements not previously reported. Of these, all targets had been achieved apart from the following:-

- AB target grade in the range 52-57%, which had just been missed, as discussed under Item 1.
- Applied AS double award pass rate of 90%. Just missed at 89.3% although well in excess of national average.
- College attendance at 90.1% was below the target of 92%. Ofsted inspectors had considered the attendance to be good and there was a discussion as to how to set the target for the coming year – it was likely to be set at 91% in order to be both challenging and realistic.

New building update

Keith Blackwell said that there was little to report as progress had been slower than he had hoped. He had met with Michael Edwards Associates and emphasised the need for commitment to move the project along. He felt that the key current issue was planning permission. Currently Terry Price, Paul Monaghan and Mike Kemsley were the key governor contacts in terms of moving the project forward but all governors would be advised as soon as the project was at a state where approvals for action were needed. He confirmed that if the College was unable to progress plans for a total rebuild it would need to consider how to enhance the existing buildings.

New staff

A list of new staff had been circulated prior to the meeting.

8. GOVERNORS SAR

The Self Assessment report had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Clerk highlighted the main points from this. The College Governance and Finance frameworks had been subject to a Provider Financial Assurance Review alongside the Ofsted inspection in May, and had been awarded a “Grade 1 Outstanding” in both cases. A copy of the report was attached to the Self Assessment Report for information. No significant weaknesses had been identified but there were four items which merited attention and the Clerk explained how these had been dealt with.

The QUIP for 2007-08 had been reviewed at the Governors Inset day. The outcomes for each target had been noted and were also included as an appendix to the document. All except three of the targets had been fully achieved and those that had not were being carried forward to the 2008-09 QUIP.

This year, part of the self assessment process had been by committee and the results of this and the discussions at the Inset day had been used to inform the QUIP for the new academic year. At the Inset day, Governors felt that the QUIP would benefit from being more structured and they welcomed the new format, which was based on headings from the SARQ (Self Assessment Report Questionnaire) which had been completed as part of the PFA Inspection.

After a short discussion of the document, Robyn Ross proposed approval of it. This was seconded by Michael Butlin and agreed unanimously by the meeting.

9. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Committee membership was reviewed and the following appointments unanimously agreed: -

- David Lavarack – Chair of Audit committee.
- Jo Canessa to sit on the Audit and Estates committees.
- Susan Effendowicz to sit on Review/Search and Estates committees.
- Michael Butlin to be the Convener of the Special Committee. Other members to be appointed when there was a need to convene the committee.

It was noted that whoever was elected as Vice Chair should sit on the Remuneration committee.

10. MATTERS ARISING FROM ACADEMIC STAFF/STUDENTS

Staff

Pam Whyman thanked the College on behalf of staff for the bonus received in the summer.

Students

Pele Ling circulated a Student Council Review of 2008. He highlighted the various activities undertaken since January this year, the calendar of events for 2008 and 2009, and the new notice boards installed in the canteen which had information, photos of council members and a fundraising thermometer. He emphasised the Council's continuing support for charities and enclosed a record of monies raised from September to July 2008. Finally, he attached bank statements showing the balance held increasing from £5,471 in September 2007 to £12,172 this September. All agreed that this was a magnificent achievement. Keith Blackwell commented that the Student Council currently enjoyed a high profile in the College and was viewed very positively by students and he felt that Pele Ling had worked hard to achieve this.

All present congratulated Pele Ling on his informative presentation and felt that this would be useful for governors to receive such information on a regular basis.

Action: Student governors to make a short presentation on the work of the Student Council twice a year, at the July and December Corporation meetings.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Admissions policy

Keith Blackwell tabled an amendment to the 2009 Admissions Policy to state that students with 4 C + plus grades (rather than 3 or 4) can follow a combined Level 2/3 programme. He explained that this was due to the difficulty the College had experienced in devising suitable programmes for students with 3 GCSEs. He confirmed that this would only affect a handful of students and that the College would work with them to find alternative provision. He advised that he was currently carrying out a full review of the Admissions Policy for 2010 which would be brought to the next Policy meeting. However, for the moment, he simply wished to resolve this one small item. After a short discussion, David Lavarack proposed approval of this amendment. This was seconded by Chris Johnson and approved unanimously.

The Esher College Africa Trust (ECAT)

Keith Blackwell reported that the Trust was being extremely successful with two students progressing to university and an increase over the last year in students

supported by the programme from 50 to 81. This was warmly welcomed by governors. He had brought to the meeting a number of letters from students which he thought governors would find interesting. They were all hand written and there was some discussion as to how to give a flavour of their contents to governors. It was concluded that this might be best achieved by assembling a selection of extracts.

Action: Keith Blackwell to arrange for extracts of the letters to be made available as evidence of the work being done by the trust.

Governor Training

There was a discussion about the courses available in the LSC programme for 2008-09 as shown in the booklet circulated with the agenda. Governors were encouraged to review the courses available. David Lavarack expressed an interest in the Audit and Risk Management course and Mike Kemsley in the Finance course.

Action: Governors to advise the Clerk of any courses which they wished to attend.

Governor Portal

Pele Ling asked whether student governors had been given email addresses to access the portal which was currently under development. It was recognised that they had not and that this should be rectified.

Action: Clerk to ask David Lloyd to set up governor portal email addresses for students.

Confidential Resolution

There was a brief discussion about the rationale behind the exclusion of certain people from Part 2 of the meeting. Pam Whyman commented that the confidential resolution prior to the Part 2 of the minutes did not reflect the fact that the staff and student members did not attend that part of the meeting.

Action: Clerk to review the wording of the Confidential Resolution and amend if appropriate.

End of Term of Office

Finally, Terry Price noted that this was Laura Coughtrie's last meeting as her term of office expired at the beginning of October, and he thanked her for her hard work and contribution over the last two years.

12. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

*The date of the next meeting is **Tuesday 9th December 2008***

13. CONFIDENTIAL RESOLUTION

Terry Price proposed that in view of the confidential nature of information to be dealt with in Part II of the agenda that representatives of the press and members of the public should be excluded from the meeting during the proceedings to which this resolution applies.

Chair

Date