

**ESHER COLLEGE CROSS-COLLEGE TEAMS: CORPORATION SELF-ASSESSMENT  
REPORT**

<b>DEPARTMENT / TEAM:</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 2018</b>
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**CORPORATION PERFORMANCE REVIEW FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/18**

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21<sup>st</sup> August 2018

## **1. AIM AND FOCUS OF THIS REPORT**

The aim of this Report is to assess the Corporation's performance for the academic year 2017–2018. Self-evaluation is a key aspect of effective governance, and will help the Corporation to continue to develop and improve.

The Corporation is the governing body of Esher College. Its core functions are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and the strategic direction of the College
- Holding the Principal to account for the educational performance of the College and its students, and the performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the College and making sure that its money is well spent

These functions are exercised in support of the College's vision, which can be found on the College website: <https://www.esher.ac.uk/the-college/overview/Pages/mission-statement.aspx> as can a full list of governors and their responsibilities: <https://www.esher.ac.uk/the-college/overview/esher-college-corporation/Pages/corporation-members.aspx>

This Report reflects the annual review of the Corporation's operation. It provides a brief overview of the academic year, and lists the monitoring processes the Corporation has undertaken to comply with its responsibilities and to ensure that its performance is improved. Finally, the Report summarises the Corporation's focus for the next academic year.

The outcome of this process provides an Action Plan ("Quality Improvement Plan") to enable the Corporation to focus its attention on areas to continuously improve its performance. (See Appendices A and B for the plans for this year and the year to come).

## **2. OVERVIEW OF 2017-2018**

Priorities in the Governance Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2017/18 were identified at the governors' training event in June 2017.

The Corporation has focussed its attention on the following areas this year:

- The consolidation of the new governance structure (agreed in July 2017) which saw the Corporation decrease in size from 20 governors to 15 in order to become a leaner, more effective body. In addition, the committees were re-structured to focus effort, and rationalise workload. To reflect these changes, the Corporation's Instrument and Articles of Government were revised in the Autumn, as were its Standing Orders.
- Academy status - having monitored the national situation regarding the number of Sixth Form Colleges converting to Academy status (very few), and having commissioned research into the advantages and disadvantages of changing from the College's current status, the Corporation decided in the Spring of 2018 that there were no compelling educational or financial reasons to become a single academy trust.
- The Quality & Standards committee – reviewed examination results for 2016/17 and retention rates of students.
- The Strategy & Policy committee reviewed admissions.

- The financial performance of the College was monitored against its budget, and the budget for 2018-19 was approved.
- The new Safeguarding Link governor met with the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead to monitor the changes being introduced nationally in relation to safeguarding procedures.
- Seven policies were reviewed and approved, of which three were statutory. These included, amongst others, Admissions for 2019 entry, Equality & Diversity, Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing, and Disaster Recovery.
- Property Strategy – the Finance & Estates committee focussed on student numbers and the potential further development of the site.
- The Corporation welcomed new members this year: Staff Governor, Hannah McKean; Parent Governor, Adrian Mills; Student Governors, Ben Jureidini and Dona Gjyshinca
- The Audit committee had commissioned an extended audit into the College's Health and Safety procedures, and were pleased with the results.

### **3. FOCUS FOR 2018 - 2019**

Following its self-evaluation activity, the Corporation has identified that, to continue the development of effective governance and to best support the College, it will focus on the following areas in 2018/19:

- Continue to monitor the fast-changing national and local education landscape to ensure that the college can take advantage of any opportunities to further raise standards in education.
- Review the committee structure (and the associated terms of reference) in the Autumn 2018, once it has bedded down for a year.
- Continue to monitor the College's financial health.
- Oversee the College's 3-year Strategic Plan
- Examine opportunities for refreshing the composition of the Corporation (in line with equality & diversity objectives) as governors' terms of office end.

See Appendix B for specific targets identified in the Quality Improvement Plan for 2018/19.

### **4. ANNUAL MONITORING ACTIVITY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

The following processes, reviews and audits were carried out to assess the Corporation's effectiveness and ensure continuous improvement of performance.

**Register of Business Interests** – in line with good governance practice, a register is maintained of all Governors' financial and personal interests to ensure that they do not stand to gain any direct or indirect reward from any transaction with the College.

**Governors' Code of Conduct** – this was reviewed earlier in the year.

**Committee Membership** - membership of committees is reviewed annually each autumn, and skills of individuals matched to particular committees where possible.

**Committee Terms of Reference (TOR)** – will be reviewed in Autumn 2018 as part of the evaluation of the re-structuring of committees that took place in 2017.

**New Governor Induction** – feedback from new members after their induction into the Corporation revealed that no changes were required to the Induction Policy.

**Presentations To the Corporation** – governors requested, and received, presentations from staff on the College's exam results for 2016/17, and on the realignment of leadership and management teams and the role of development groups in driving quality initiatives across the College.

**Governors' Attendance Review** – attendance at all meetings averaged 77% (marginally less than the 78% attained last year). This compares to a national statistic of the wider college sector of 80%.

**Equality and Diversity Audit of Governors** – at the start of the academic year, membership of the Corporation was overwhelmingly White British, with 33.3% of governors being female. This compares to 78.5% of students being White British and 14% declaring that they were of Black and Minority Ethnicity; 59% of students were female.

**Skills Audit 2017-18** – the annual questionnaire captures current expertise and professional skills in use by governors. Post-16/Higher Education experience is a particular strength of the Corporation. This year, several governors suggested that the list of skills captured on the questionnaire should be reviewed and re-focussed on the areas of competence which could better support the College going forward. This exercise will be concluded in September 2018.

**Governor Training and Continuing Professional Development** - Governors completed an online safeguarding training module as well as completing the Channel training for Prevent. The Clerk attended the annual SFCA conference for corporation clerks. The annual Training Morning for Governors took place in June 2018, part of which focussed on the collective self-evaluation of the Corporation, on the College's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulations, on the College's 3 year Strategic Plan, and on obtaining feedback from students as to their experiences of learning and College life. Finally, governors receive termly presentations on key areas of College management as part of their CPD.

**Governors' Visits to the College** – Governors made visits to the College to see it in operation and to further improve their understanding of College procedures, and to forge relationships. 24 visits to the College were made during the course of the year to carry out Departmental Joint Review meetings, meet with the Senior Leadership Team, participate in the appraisal of the Principal, Deputy Principal and Clerk, visit productions and shows, and in their roles as Link governors. The volume of attendance was less than that of previous years [31 in 2017/18, 39 in 2016/17].

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This Report has demonstrated how and what the Corporation has focused this year on in its self-evaluation and development for improvement.

In the 2017-18 academic year, the Corporation concentrated on:

- finalizing its research into whether academy conversion was appropriate for the College, and deciding that it would offer no significant advantage;
- implementing the new committee structure with a slimmer Corporation membership;
- continuing to move forward the College's Property Strategy;
- monitoring the College's financial health;
- analysing the admissions intake, and ensuring that the Admissions Policy remained robust.

In the next academic year the Corporation will build on this by developing some of the existing targets in the QIP, and in addition focusing on:

- evaluating how well the committee structure is working;
- overseeing the College's Strategic Plan for 2019 – 22;
- reviewing next steps for the potential expansion of elements of the site
- exploring opportunities to diversify the membership of the Corporation.

Approved by the Corporation on: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018