



## **MINUTES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Held At Esher College  
Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016, at 6.00 pm.

### **Present:**

Clarissa Wilks (Chair)	Jo Gardner
Darrell Bate	Jane Grenander
Albert Berry	Damian O'Malley
Dan Dean	Terry Price (ex-officio)
Helen Odhams (Deputy Principal)	
Rebecca De'Ath (Clerk)	

### **1. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME**

The Committee Chair welcomed new members, and introductions were made.

### **2. BUSINESS INTERESTS IN AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no declarations.

### **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Karin Rowsell and Tim Oliver sent their apologies, which were accepted. Lin McGarry did not attend.

### **4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016 were accepted as an accurate record.

### **5. MATTERS ARISING**

P3-001: Completed. The Principal did amend the ABR briefing paper.

P3-002: Completed. Date of this meeting was agreed.

### **6. COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (2015-16) QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (2016-17)**

#### **College SAR (2015-16)**

The Deputy Principal confirmed that the College's mission and strategic direction had not been changed.

Governors looked at each section in turn, and asked the following questions:

Q: Was there more S7 collaboration last year in terms of subject groups? Yes, there were bottom-up requests for subject areas to get together, and English and Maths have already met.

Q: So we are in a transition phase in terms of GCSE 'A' level reform until September 2017? Yes; at that point all subjects will have reformed to the linear phase. From this year, students have embarked on a two-year course of study.

Q: How have teachers adapted to the new linear approach? A two-year course a new experience for some teachers and will require a mind-set shift, but it is too soon to say. Ongoing staff development is focused on this change.

Governors noted the importance of ensuring that students had the correct choice of subject to see them through their two years at Esher, and asked questions about the interviewing process prior to enrolment. It was agreed that the College should ensure that the courses matched the needs of students to enable them to flourish, and that the process was not focussed purely on meeting SAR requirements.

In terms of work done on safeguarding, the meeting noted the amount of work that the Vice Principal had completed to ensure that the correct procedures were in place, that all staff received the same message, and that there was an audit trail to show that the relevant training had taken place. Governors had been involved in this process.

Q: Do you analyse vulnerable groups of students such as those receiving Free School Meals and Pupil Premium, and Looked After Children, for example? We break down the groups of Learners in the Departmental and cross-college SARs. Further detail could be added to the College SAR.

**ACTION: Principal and Deputy Principal** to add further detail to the SAR for the December Corporation meeting.

The meeting agreed that the inclusion of the excellent Higher Education Statistics Agency table was very useful for tracking former students' achievements at degree level.

The meeting thanked the Deputy Principal for her summary.

#### **QIP 2016-17**

The Committee Chair stated that it was the meeting's role to ensure that the targets in the QIP were appropriately-pitched, and to determine whether the actions and performance indicators were helpful in achieving the desired outcomes.

Governors made the following suggestions:

*Target 10. To review the Departmental SAR process* – this target could be made smarter, perhaps with the addition of wording such as “in order to ensure maximum impact on quality”. This is not about documents and the process, but the impact on the experience of Learners.

*Target 16. To improve the attendance of vulnerable, discipline and bursary students* – Rank this 2.

Governors discussed whether targets with a lower grading might be perceived by staff as something to ignore, and the Principal explained that the narrative around the target would highlight its importance.

Asking where the targets for the exams were derived from, the meeting was informed that they

stemmed from national benchmarks and previous College performance and were intended to be realistic in the light of the move to linear subjects. Hence the targets remained largely unchanged from last year, but may be revised upwards next year in the light of exam results. The meeting agreed that these targets were pitched at the appropriate level.

The meeting agreed to commend the QIP to the Corporation, subject to the above small amendments and making target 10 more impact-focussed.

**ACTION: Deputy Principal** to amend the QIP in the light of suggestions.

## **7. STUDENT RETENTION AND PROGRESSION REPORT**

“Progression” meant movement of students from 6.1 to 6.2 (not onwards to destinations).

Governors felt that the four-year data trend on page 1 was very helpful, and noted the additional detail given in Table 4. They asked whether the issue raised on page 2 (retention in 6.2 after enrolment and before enumeration) was something for the College to follow-up on.

**ACTION: Principal** agreed to discuss this with the Vice-Principal.

## **8. ADMISSIONS ANALYSIS 2016**

The Principal was very pleased with the number of students actually recruited in 2016. The use of “live” applicant data had led to a more precise indication of outcome. The meeting then reviewed the enrolment take-up rates of the Guaranteed and Open applicants and of applicants by geographical area and by school.

It was gratifying to see that the Principal’s collaboration with Chessington Community College over the year had contributed to the large number of enrolments from their students.

Governors discussed the possibility of the anticipated take-up rates of several schools falling below expectations, and the usefulness of a scenario-planning exercise as an impact assessment.

Finally, the Principal sought agreement that the assumptions on take-up rates were appropriate. The meeting approved these assumptions.

### **Planning for Admissions Policy for 2018 Entry**

The meeting noted that there were no recommendations for any changes to the criteria for admissions for 2018.

The Principal raised the fact that Twickenham Academy no longer had a sixth form and should therefore be added to the list of schools whose students had guaranteed entry to the College. It was suggested that he enter into a dialogue with the Academy to collaborate on the way forward.

**ACTION: Principal** to enter into preliminary discussions with Twickenham Academy to inform the admissions policy for 2018.

## **9. UPDATE ON ACADEMY APPLICATION**

The Principal gave a verbal update on the process:

- The Principal had met with the Heads of Chessington Community College, Thamesmead School and Esher High School; all were enthusiastic about closer links with the College.
- He had also met with Helen Cairns (Eversheds) to discuss the legal process of conversion.
- The academy application was submitted on 21<sup>st</sup> November, and the College now awaits to see if it is approved in principle.
- There will be a meeting with the Education Funding Agency on 12<sup>th</sup> December, where the point will be made about the volume of work required to claim back the zero-rated VAT retrospectively charged on college buildings since 2011 (a requirement of conversion from private to public organisation).
- Much preparatory work is required in terms of consultations, due diligence processes and determining a governance structure.

The meeting discussed the nature of the decision about academisation that was taken at the July Corporation meeting (*The meeting agreed that the recommendation of the Policy Committee for the College to apply to be a SAT should be the way forward. If the application for academy status was later rejected by the DfE, or conditions were set that the Corporation would object to, then the College would be at liberty to change its mind about the application (and would discuss this at a meeting of the Corporation).* It was felt that there might be differences in interpretation of this agreement to change status in principle and that the final decision to convert had yet to be made.

The meeting agreed the following **actions**:

- Principal to confirm the Corporation’s position on conversion to academy status and agree a timeline for conversion.
- Corporation Chair to establish a small Working Party to deal with governance under an academy structure which would make recommendations to the Policy Committee and the Corporation.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

*The meeting closed at 7.25pm.*

*Attendance was 78% (7 out of 9 members)*

Signed.....

Date.....

## SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

<b>P1-001</b>	<u>Item 6: SAR</u> - <b>Principal and Deputy Principal</b> to add further detail to the SAR prior to the December Corporation meeting (as suggested above). <u>Item 6: QIP</u> - <b>Deputy Principal</b> to amend the QIP in the light of comments made by Governors.
<b>P1-002</b>	<u>Item 7: Student Retention and Progression</u> - <b>Principal to discuss</b> with the Vice-Principal further action required in relation to the retention issue in 6.2 after enrolment and before enumeration.
<b>P1-003</b>	<u>Item 8: Admissions Policy 2018</u> - <b>Principal</b> to enter into preliminary discussions with Twickenham Academy to inform the admissions policy for 2018.
<b>P1-004</b>	<u>Item 9: Academy Conversion</u> - <b>Principal</b> to confirm the Corporation's position on conversion to academy status and agree a timeline for conversion. <b>Corporation Chair</b> to establish a small Working Party to deal with governance under an academy structure which would make recommendations to the Policy Committee and the Corporation.

## SUMMARY OF GOVERNOR CHALLENGE [C] / SUPPORT [S]

C/S	Minute	Topic
C	6	<u>SAR/QIP</u> – Challenge raised in terms of the College's preparation for the change to linear subjects and its capture of data on more vulnerable groups of students. Several amendments suggested to the QIP.
S C	7	<u>Student Retention</u> – Governors felt that the more detailed report was very helpful. They felt that an issue on retention required further follow-up by the College.
S	8	<u>Admissions</u> – Governor's suggestion for scenario-planning to prepare for any potential upset to admissions predictions showed support to the SLT.
C S	9	<u>Academy conversion</u> – challenge from Governors that the decision to convert needed to be formally captured at the next corporation meeting. Support shown in that the meeting recognised the volume of work that might be required to change the College's status and the agreement to a working party to support the College by determining new governance arrangements.