



MINUTES OF THE STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Held At Esher College
Wednesday, 29th November 2017, at 6.00 pm.

Present:

David Irving (Chair)	Tim Oliver
Dan Dean	Clarissa Wilks
Adrian Mills	Ben Williams
Damian O' Malley	

Helen Odhams, Deputy Principal (Advising Officer)
Dan Hards, Vice-Principal Student Services (Advising Officer)
Rebecca De'Ath (Clerk)

1. BUSINESS INTERESTS IN AGENDA ITEMS

The Clerk stated that, although she was not a governor, in relation to item 6 (Admissions), she wished to make it known had a daughter who was being interviewed for a place at the College. The meeting noted this. There were no declarations of business interests from governors.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Jo Gardner had sent her apologies, which were accepted (see item 8, below).

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee of 22nd June 2017 and those of the Review & Search Committee of 9th May 2017 were approved as accurate records.

4. MATTERS ARISING

All actions had been completed.

P3-001: Item 6 - The Corporation Chair had produced a new governance structure for the Head Teachers' Board, and updated the Committee structure as agreed

RS3-001: The previous LA Governor had been informed that he could serve out his term if he wished to, and did not have to immediately step down having left office.

RS3-002: Local S7 colleges had been contacted in terms of governance training that might be shared across the institutions. A response was awaited.

RS3-003: Karin Rowsell and Fran Stewart had been contacted and had confirmed that they would be happy to commence a second term as governor. Additionally, a Committee Structure Review had been added to the agenda for the June Policy Committee meeting.

RS3-004: The Training Morning covered the EQR presentation and Governance Competency Framework.

RS3-005: The Governors' QIP had been amended.

The Principal gave a verbal update about the Academy process – the paperwork had been submitted in good time for the Head Teachers' Board in mid-September, however it would seem that Esher's application was overlooked. This will now be considered at a Board meeting in January or February 2018. The meeting agreed that the decision as to whether to commit to a change of status would therefore now be put back to the Corporation meeting in March 2018.

Tim Oliver arrived at 18.07

5. COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (November 2017) AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2017/18

Self-assessment Report (SAR)

The Deputy Principal explained that the SAR format and construction was under review, as this had not been scrutinised for some time. She had sought advice on the content of the SAR from Darrell Bate, in his capacity as an OFSTED Inspector, and would weave his comments into the relevant sections below.

Clarissa Wilks arrived at 18.10

The meeting's attention was drawn to highlights in each section:

- Effectiveness of Leadership and Management

Darrell Bate had suggested inserting some words in this section about governance. The meeting discussed whether this would duplicate the content of the Governors' SAR and it was decided that a sentence could be added to point to the existence of the Governors' SAR.

ACTION: Deputy Principal to capture this addition.

Changes were made last year to the Progress Review process to ensure that it was fit for the new linear exams; this work is ongoing and governors would be kept apprised of developments at future meetings throughout the year.

A major undertaking last year was the development of the extension curriculum at 6:2 in the form of progression pathways to support students to achieve their destinations. A further six pathways have been developed, and the target this year is to review their effectiveness by analysing outcomes and progression.

Governors asked the Deputy Principal the following questions:

Q: The strategic objectives cover 2015–18. Are they on a three-yearly cycle? Yes.

Q: Frequent mention is made of the College always being “significantly over-subscribed”. Is this an appropriate phrase? It is factually correct.

Q: In the Mission Statement, should the last half of the final bullet point relating to the wider community be deleted? Yes, we will consider this at the next review point.

Q: In terms of thinking more radically about securing the College's future, could you consider running a second school in the evenings, for example? The Financial Strategy Working Group considered this, along with ideas such as extending the timetable to 5pm, but that would require significant investment and resources.

Q: Should the SAR cover support for disadvantaged students? The Outcomes for Learners section covers different groups of learners; we will come to this later.

- Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

An Information Learning Technology Co-ordinator was appointed last year to audit these practices across the College and seek the views of staff and students. A plan was established to improve how Departments engage with ILT within the curriculum to support teaching, learning and assessment. Bite-sized training has been established with more experienced staff cascading their IT knowledge to others, and more of this work will continue throughout the year.

Damian O'Malley arrived at 18.22

The College has had one Extended Quality Review visit this year, and this and previous visits have confirmed that those Departments that were reviewed have been graded in line with the College's own assessment. In addition to subject-based visits, the College had requested a cross-College review later in the year to support the College's work in enhancing assessment and feedback processes. A new in-house Teaching and Learning Group has also been set up to develop a more consistent approach to this within Departments.

- Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

Prevent and British Values was both a strength and an area for development within the College. This is continually under review, and staff have been consulted as to how this might be developed.

Darrell Bate had suggested to the Deputy Principal a range of other issues that could be considered in this section, including, attendance and punctuality, Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and wider learning opportunities. With no national benchmarks for attendance and punctuality, it is difficult to compare ourselves with others in the sector. All the issues commented on for this year, have been 'business as usual' which is why they have not been added. However, the Deputy Principal will consider the addition of these for the SAR that goes to Corporation.

ACTION: Deputy Principal to consider additions to this section in consultation with the Principal

- Outcomes for Learners

This section had been edited down from that of last year, as the information is already known by OFSTED and the DfE. The Deputy Principal was pleased to report the L3VA outcomes, which were above average for all categories (four of which were categorised as statistically significant.)

The outcomes for the different groups of learners had been given in some detail to the Quality and Standards Committee to review and hence the SAR contained only a summary. It had been suggested that this section of the SAR be enhanced. She explained that the College defined "disadvantaged" students as those receiving a bursary or pupil premium grant (PPG).

In response to a question about social mobility, the Deputy Principal replied that students receiving a bursary or PPG have their progress tracked and monitored at each progress review meeting at three points during the year. Progress guidance and different pathways are offered to each student. Of the 53 students in this category last year, only two did not attain their planned destination and were seeking employment. The College actively recruits from pockets of social deprivation in the area. Once students commence at the College, the focus is on ensuring progress for all, in the round.

The meeting concluded that there were no significant gaps in the performance of different groups of learners, and that the lowest 25% had progressed above expectation.

Higher Education Statistics Agency results had been released and were very positive. The meeting congratulated the College on the outcomes that ex-Esher students had gained at university.

Finally, the Deputy Principal explained that destination data captured the *intended* destination, not whether the student actually *attained* their preferred destination. The College was looking at ways to improve this data.

Governors asked her the following question:

Q: Does the College give guidance to students as to how to undertake a gap year? Yes, we have gap year providers at the Higher Education convention and we also give our own guidance. (Governors suggested that “gap year” might be worded more accurately to refer to students as those who “defer entry to university”.)

Governors thanked the Deputy Principal for her report.

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The meeting focussed on the 2017/18 QIP (the 2016/17 QIP had already been presented to the Corporation in September for discussion). Governors sought the following additional information from the Deputy Principal:

Q: Does this Plan go to OFSTED? Yes.

The Committee Chair thanked the Deputy Principal for her hard work in producing the QIP. The meeting agreed to recommend to the Corporation that the SAR (November 2017) and QIP 2017/18 be approved.

6. ADMISSIONS ANALYSIS 2017

Having reviewed the analysis on admissions in 2017 and applications for entry in 2018, the meeting noted that there were no recommendations for any change to Admissions criteria (and that the policy would be reviewed next year for September 2019 entry). The Principal was minded to hold a review of the criteria for appeals, in which case a separate document would be produced for the Committee’s attention in due course.

Governors felt that the focus for the College should be on increasing the conversion rate of applications to enrolments. Did the College use targeted social media? The Principal confirmed that this was an objective of the Marketing Manager and that getting the Introduction Day right was key to increasing the conversion rate.

The meeting thanked the Principal for the information he had provided them with.

7. REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS

Governors' Code of Conduct

This document had last been reviewed in 2014. The Clerk had researched best practice examples, and the following additions were agreed:

- a statement to the effect that if it was felt that the Code had been breached, this would be investigated in an appropriate manner;
- in the event of a conversion to academy status, "Corporation" would be replaced with "Trust".

The meeting approved the document subject to the above revisions.

Staff Code of Conduct

This document had been brought before the Committee as it related to Terms & Conditions of staff. It had Trades Union agreement and had already been reviewed by the relevant management teams.

The Committee approved the Code.

Standing Orders

Wording to the Standing Orders had been changed to reflect the Governing Body's decrease in size from 20 governors to 16; to reflect the merger of the Finance and Estates Committees, and the Review and Search and Policy Committees merging into the Strategy and Policy Committee, and the establishment of the new Quality and Standards Committee; finally, to add in the rule about maximum terms of office for governors.

It was recommended that the Corporation be advised to approve these changes.

Instrument and Articles of Government

It was agreed that the date that the amendments below were agreed, and a description of the changes be inserted onto the first page of Schedule 1.

Instrument of Government

The maximum number of external governors was reduced from 13 to no more than 9.

Articles of Government

The Review and Search **Committee** would be replaced with review and search **function** in paragraph 5, which would be carried out by the new Strategy and Policy Committee.

The Clerk was asked to ensure that there was consistency in the wording of the new Committee's name (i.e. Strategy and Policy, not Policy and Strategy), and that the Instrument and Articles **of Government** were referred to in full.

The meeting agreed to recommend that the Corporation approve these revisions.

ACTION: Clerk to change wording as appropriate.

8. CONSTITUTION

Staff Governor

Jo Gardner had been on a sabbatical this term for family reasons, and had now resigned from her post at the College with effect from the end of the term. The College was very sorry to see her go. An election will be held for another staff governor, with a deadline for nominations of 11th December 2017.

9. GOVERNOR TRAINING

Following a discussion, the meeting agreed to suggest to the Corporation that subjects for presentations in the spring and summer terms might be:

March: Management Teams (how they meet and interact)

July: Safeguarding (covering changes to safeguarding legislation)

ACTION: Assistant Principal (Student Services) to work up a topic on Safeguarding.

Several topics were also raised that might be suitable for the Training Morning:

- Funding methodology
- How governors could think strategically to support the College in the future (which could feed into the College's 3-year plan).

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No additional business was raised.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, 28th February 2018.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.

Attendance was 88% (7 out of 8 members).

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

S&P 1-001	<p><u>Item 5. College SAR: Deputy Principal</u> to amend the SAR as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • add a sentence into the Leadership and Management section drawing attention to the existence of the Governors' SAR; • Deputy Principal to consider additions to the Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare section in consultation with the Principal
S&P 1-002	<p><u>Item 7. Instrument and Articles of Government: Clerk</u> to effect changes to the wording as agreed.</p>
S&P 1-003	<p>Item 9. Governor Training: Assistant Principal (Student Services) to detail a presentation on Safeguarding for the July 2018 Corporation meeting.</p>

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

C/S	Minute	Topic
C	Item 5.	<p><u>College SAR</u> Reviewed by this Committee and by the governor with the most relevant expertise; suggestions made as to how to make the document more comprehensive.</p>
C		<p>Governors' questions to ensure that all groups of learners are progressing sufficiently.</p>
S		<p>Committee supportive of the College's above average HESA outcomes.</p>
S/C	Item 6.	<p><u>Admissions Analysis and Admissions Policy 2018</u> The meeting agreed that the analysis of the previous year's admissions process was comprehensive, and that changes were not required to the process.</p>
C	Item 7.	<p><u>Governors' Code of Conduct</u> The Code was reviewed and amended in the light of best practice.</p>
S/C	Item 8.	<p><u>Changes to Standing Orders and the Instrument and Articles of Government</u> The meeting agreed new wording for these documents to reflect changes to the constitution and committee structure.</p>
S	Item 9.	<p><u>Governors' Training</u> The Committee agreed topics for presentations at future Corporation meetings that would add to their knowledge and would also provide governors with an opportunity to support the College strategically in the medium term.</p>