



**MINUTES OF THE ESHER COLLEGE CORPORATION
MEETING**

Held At Esher College

Wednesday, 21 September 2016, at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Terry Price (Chair)	Robin John
Albert Berry	David Laverack
Paul Collyer	Ian Leigh
Dan Dean	Daniel Loughlin
Simon D'Arcy	Tim Oliver
Jo Gardner	Damian O'Malley
Jane Grenander	Fran Stewart
David Irving	Clarissa Wilks

Helen Odhams, Deputy Principal (Advising Officer)

Rebecca De'Ath, Clerk

PART I MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND PRESENTATION ON EXAMINATION RESULTS 2016

The Chair welcomed Jo Gardner (Head of English) and Dan Loughlin (Director of IT) to the meeting, in their new roles as Staff Governors. He also welcomed Helen Odhams, the newly-appointed Deputy Principal.

The Deputy Principal gave Governors a presentation on the exam results. She was pleased to report the excellent results achieved at "A" and "AS" level, of which the students and staff were very proud. The results were significantly above national standards. At "A" level, students achieved a 99.3% pass rate; at "AS" level this was 95%. The high grade results at each level were significantly above national benchmarks. Governors noted this significant improvement on last year, and asked the following questions:

- What percentage of the subjects were the new reformed ones? About a third were; this year saw the first group to sit the exams in reformed subjects. Pass rates were higher than for legacy subjects, although all the figures are well above national averages. In terms of AS high grades, legacy subjects were 10% higher than the previous year. We are investigating the background to these statistics: Departmental Heads are currently writing their Self-Assessment Reports, and we have an October meeting and Inset date to review outcomes.
- Is the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) worth about half an "A" level? Yes.
- Why is the EPQ result lower than last year? I will speak to the Co-ordinator, but I am not concerned about this still good outcome.
- In a few subjects the results were a little below the College average – are there any issues here? Was there any correlation between this year's results when compared to the previous year? We have asked for reports from those Subject Heads, and will be putting interventions in place, such as a senior manager and divisional head working with Heads of Departments on a proportionate basis. With a couple of exceptions, there seems to be no correlation between 2016 and 2015 sets of results for these subjects.
- Should the College be thinking about how we talk to students to boost the confidence of those who received a "U" in one of their subjects? Yes; they will already have spoken to their Tutors.

- Have there been many increases in the number of re-marks submitted? There were 162 requests for reviews of marking, (which examines whether the marking scheme was applied appropriately). We await some results, but thus far 24 have received a higher grade. We have not found any trends in standards of marking per subject; this tends to occur between examination boards, and varies year on year. The College is not worried about the standard this year, other than in Dance, where there may possibly be a Centre-wide review.

To conclude, Governors asked that their thanks be passed to all of the staff for the significant increase in this year's results, particularly the improvements in AS pass rates and in the high grades attained. They noted the high level of teaching and learning that had produced such results, in tandem with "soft" measures such as attendance and support mechanisms for the students.

2. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest in items on tonight's agenda.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Karin Rowsell, Lin McGarry and Peter Hickman; Fran Stewart was delayed; Emily Jeans did not attend.

4. CONSTITUTION

The Corporation unanimously approved the appointment of Chair (Terry Price) for 2016/17, whereupon his final term as Governor would cease. Chair Designate (Tim Oliver) would take over as Chair in September 2017, and this was unanimously approved, as was Vice Chair (Robin John) - both for two-year periods.

- Committee Chairs – Robin John had been approved as Chair of the Finance Committee at the previous meeting; since then, Paul Collyer had volunteered to fill the Audit Committee Chair vacancy – this was approved. Both will serve for two years in the first instance.
- Environmental Sustainability Link Governor – requests had been made for a volunteer to fill this post; none had been forthcoming to date. (It was noted that it was not a statutory requirement to have such a post). The Corporation Chair agreed to attend Environmental Sustainability meetings until this role is filled.
- Safeguarding Link Governor – Lin McGarry's term as Governor will be ending on 11 December, and she will be standing down. This Link Governor role will become vacant. Damian O'Malley volunteered to succeed her and this was unanimously approved. The meeting noted that a successor to chair the Review & Search Committee would be required in due course.
- Schedule of Corporation dates – this had been approved at the July meeting. However, the Director of Finance and Estates had recently asked if the 3rd November Finance Committee meeting could be put back to 10th November, to enable her to finalise the Management Accounts beforehand. The meeting agreed to this change.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (5th July 2016)

Governors felt that two areas of the minutes needed amplification:

Page 3, paragraph 5: the sentence about a 1% surplus should have captured the point made that the surplus would go into existing reserves, but if any sum was spent from these reserves, then the College would drop to a "satisfactory" financial rating from EFA.

Summary of Governor Challenge: add in the fact that Governors explored the options for a change of status to the College via a lengthy discussion and numerous questions being put to the Principal.

The Part I minutes were otherwise approved as a true record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

C3-001: Several governors had wished to change the committee they sat on in order to broaden their experience. This was accommodated as far as was possible.

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal reported that the 2016 enrolment had gone well, reflecting almost exactly the figure planned for year 1, and marginally higher for year 2. An intake of 1850 was anticipated, 30 students up on last year.

Q: Is this putting any pressure on class sizes this year? No, there is no issue here. Classes have been capped at 22 students.

There had been a small drop in applications during the guaranteed phase; a similar number of total applicants to last year are expected at the Open phase at the end of the month.

The list of new staff appointments had been circulated.

In terms of the Surrey Area Review Process, there was little to add other than to report that the College had made an application for a transition grant for academy conversion (this would not have to be paid back should the College change its mind, provided it had been spent appropriately). The Principal was also in the process of meeting the Head teachers of Chessington Community College, Thamesmead School and Esher High School. He also summarised which of the ten S7 colleges intended to apply for academy status.

An election for a new Parent Governor was in the process of being conducted. This year the process was being carried out electronically and had resulted in a far greater participation of parents voting for a candidate.

The Principal summarised progress made against the targets in the Esher College Quality Improvement Plan, almost all of which had been met; the college would know whether the target to achieve above average outcomes for both "AS" and "A" level in the Level 3 Value Added was met when these statistics become available in November (Target 27).

Q: Why is Target 11 (to review new BTEC qualifications) only partly-achieved? We have achieved what we can given the external influences.

There was an update on the sad death of an Esher College student which occurred in June at the O2 Arena: the Principal had attended her funeral, as had many of her student friends. He had spoken to her father about how best to mark her time at the College and is in discussion with the Student Union as to how this might be carried out. Finally, he reported that the College was doing all it could to help police with their enquiries.

Q: Will you keep Governors informed of the direction that the police investigation takes if that might involve the College? Yes, of course. I should add that I have given a talk to all students reinforced expectations.

Governors thanked the Principal for his Report.

Fran Stewart arrived at the meeting at 6.30pm

8. GOVERNORS' SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2016

Governors reviewed the Self-Assessment Report (SAR), and the targets they had met last year (in the Report's Appendix A), as well as the targets set for 2016/17 (Appendix B). The Clerk to the Corporation explained that she was awaiting final statistics to input to the equality and diversity section of the report.

Q: How many Governors completed the online Safeguarding Training? This will be covered under item 10, below.

Q: Are Governors checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service, and is this check refreshed periodically? Yes, DBS checks are carried out, but not refreshed. It is our understanding that should someone subsequently come to the notice of this Service, the relevant employers will be informed.

ACTION: Principal to consult with the HR Manager as to whether these checks should be refreshed and whether other S7 colleges do the same.

The Corporation approved the Self-Assessment Report, subject to data being finalised on page 9.

9. MATTERS ARISING FROM STAFF/STUDENTS

There was nothing to raise. The Principal did however express his reservations about having this as a standing item on the agenda, as he felt that **any** governor could bring matters of strategic interest to the meeting, therefore this item was redundant. Governors agreed that there were mechanisms for students to feed any issues they may have to the Corporation (such as via their focus groups at the Training Morning), and wondered if they should meet with focus groups of teachers as well.

ACTION: Clerk to research what other S7 colleges do, and **Review & Search Committee** to explore whether this item should be removed from future Corporation agendas.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Online Safeguarding training for Governors – the Chair explained that all Governors must complete the online Safeguarding course, which will shortly be emailed to members of the Corporation.
- Food served at Corporation meetings – there had been food leftover from that served at previous Corporation meetings. In order to minimise waste, Governors agreed to have individually-wrapped items which could be “recycled” for consumption by staff or students on another occasion (e.g. biscuits, crisps, items of fruit.)

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 13th December 2016

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.

Attendance was 80% (16 out of 20 members)

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

C1-001	Item 8: Governors' SAR – Principal to determine whether DBS checks of Governors require periodic refreshing.
C1-002	Item 9: Matters Arising from Staff/Students: Clerk to research if other S7 colleges have such an item on their Corporation meeting agendas, and R&S Committee to explore whether this item should be removed from the agenda in future.

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

C/S	Item	Topic
C/S	1	Exam Results: Governors probed why attainment was lower in some subjects than might have been expected, and what measures the College was implementing to further improve these results. Governors interested to know if there were any issues with review of markings of exams.
S	4	Constitution: approval of chairing roles, as per succession plan; refreshing membership of committees to enable experience to be spread and gained; endeavours to ensure that Link governor positions were filled.
C	5	Previous minutes: Governors challenging the comprehensiveness of the minutes of the previous meeting.
C S S	7	Principal's Report: Governors sought assurance that the additional students enrolled for 2016 would not put adverse pressure on class sizes or College facilities. Review of the Parent Governor Election procedures to ensure that the process was electronic where possible had resulted in an overwhelmingly larger participation in voting (by email) than in previous years when only hard copy ballot forms were offered. Governors wished to be kept apprised of developments in the investigation into the tragic death of a student at the O2 Arena in June.
C	8	Governors' Self-Evaluation Report: questions in relation to safeguarding training and DBS checks for Governors.
S	10	AOB: Governors wished to minimise food waste at Corporation meetings.