



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ESHER SIXTH FORM COLLEGE ACADEMY TRUSTEES

Wednesday, 22nd September 2021, at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Tim Oliver (Chair)
Dan Dean
Paul Collyer
Berzek Sanda

Declan Mason
Mark Nelligan
Ben Obese-Jecty
Pooja Singh
Emily Vanstone

Helen Odhams, Deputy Principal
(Advising Officer)
Liz Bentley-Pattison, Assistant Principal
(Advising Officer)

Dan Hards, Assistant Principal (Advising
Officer)

Ken Kehoe (Clerk)

1. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of business interests.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Fran Stewart, Ruth Seabrook, Cindy Dawes and Natasha Meade. Tom Webb and Andy McVeigh were not in attendance.

3. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Liz Bentley-Pattison, the new Assistant Principal to her first meeting.

4. PRESENTATION ON EXAMINATION RESULTS

The Deputy Principal introduced the report on the 2021 Examination results. She noted that comparisons with the results of previous years were difficult as there had been three different assessment methodologies in 3 years. The Deputy Principal explained the process for determining the grades, noting that the basket of evidence was the same for each student, unless there were special circumstances, and highlighting that, unlike the previous year, students were not ranked. The Deputy Principal noted that 66.6% of grades were A* to B at Esher Sixth Form College; this compared with 70.3% nationally. In response to Trustee questions about whether Esher College students had been disadvantaged by the College's rigorous approach, the Deputy Principal said that she was confident that Esher students had got the

appropriate grades based on assessment evidence, against a national picture of grade inflation. Turning to BTEC qualifications, the Deputy Principal briefed that the results were good, as was traditionally the case for the College.

The Deputy Principal noted the GCSE data. The English results were good with 100% pass rate and 69% in Maths for students resitting these qualifications. She also noted that some students sat a Functional Maths qualification and if that data was included 71% of students had made progress in maths.

Given the process for awarding grades nationally, Value Added data has little meaning and the DfE will not be publishing data this year. The Deputy Principal noted that departments would get their ALPS data for their Self-Assessment Reports.

In discussion, the Trustees made the following points:

- Trustees and Advising Officers were unaware of any cases in which an examination centre had been investigated for grade inflation.
- Most Esher students had got their first or reserve preference for their HE destination;
- Examinations looked set to return next year and the College were going to run mock examinations in January to give students experience. They were still waiting on Government guidance on how the examinations would be run.

The Deputy Principal noted that only 1 non-priority Stage 1 appeal had been upheld and they were still waiting to hear about 3 non-priority Stage 2 appeals. Otherwise, no appeals had been successful and the Exam Boards had agreed with the College's Teacher Assessed Grades.

The Board thanked the Deputy Principal for her report.

5. Constitution

The Clerk took the chair of the meeting. Tim Oliver and Paul Collyer, as nominees for the posts of Chair and Vice Chair, left the meeting.

Confirmation of the Chair of the Board of Trustees

The Board unanimously voted to re-appoint Tim Oliver as Chair of the Board.

Confirmation of the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees

The Board unanimously voted to re-appoint Paul Collyer as Vice-Chair.

The Chair and Vice-Chair returned to the meeting.

Confirmation of Committee Membership and Chairs

The Board approved the list of committee membership and chairs, circulated prior to the meeting.

Committee Terms of Reference

The Board approved the Terms of Reference for the Audit, Finance and Estates, Quality and Standards, Recruitment and Strategy and Policy committees. The new Chair of the Audit Committee asked for

clarification on two points in the Audit Committee Terms of Reference; it was agreed that clarification should be sought from the Director of Finance and Estates.

Action: Clarification of the Audit Terms of Reference should be sought from the Director of Finance and Estates.

Scheme of Delegation

The Board approved the Scheme of Delegation.

Parent Trustee

The Principal informed the Board that there had been only one candidate for the role of Parent Trustee and that the candidate would, therefore, be appointed at the end of the term of the current Parent Trustee, Berzek Sanda.

6. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Board approved the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting of 7th July 2021.

7. MATTERS ARISING

The actions from the last meeting had all been completed.

8. PRINCIPALS'S REPORT

The Principal began by noting that enrolment had been very successful, with the numbers of students enrolled exceeding the target and making it necessary to expand provision. In response to a Trustee's question, the Principal said that several factors had played a role:

- the age cohort was reaching its peak;
- grade inflation at GCSE level meant that more students had met the qualifying grades;
- the College had made a reputational gain because of its online provision during the COVID crisis, while some schools had not offered such a positive online experience;
- there was a 10% increase in take up from the independent sector, which may reflect the economic situation;
- There were fewer "no shows" with the online enrolment.

The Principal advised that the success of this year's intake would have to be considered when setting the number of places to offer for 2022.

In response to a question from Trustees on the impact of expanded provision on the quality of learning, the Principal noted that the set limit had been raised from 22 to 24 but standards had been maintained.

Turning to COVID, the Principal said that, as required, 2640 COVID tests had been carried out on students before term started. This had revealed 11 positive cases. There had been a further spike in cases that appeared to be associated with attendance at a music festival.

With regards to the current building projects, the Principal advised that there had been a small delay, due to cabling discovered when digging the foundations, but it was expected that the projects would be finished by Easter.

Looking to the external environment, the Principal highlighted the forthcoming spending round, the resumption of OFSTED inspections and the future of the BTEC qualification as issues that would affect the College. He noted that Government decisions on BTEC could have serious implications for the College.

The Board welcomed the Principal's report.

9. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Deputy Principal introduced the Quality Improvement Plan. When considering targets that were partially achieved, it was noted that Target 14 had been only partially achieved because the alumnae area of the College website would now be updated and developed as part of a wider review of the website. There had, however, been extensive engagement with alumnae, giving talks and supporting students. In response to a question about Target 15 (Your Start at Esher), the Assistant Principal informed the Board that in a recent survey of 800 students only 9 had said that they didn't feel welcome. The Board welcomed this result and the Assistant Principal's assurance that the College would be following up the individual cases to determine why the students had not felt welcomed.

10. SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Assistant Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead (Dan Hards) outlined the changes to the Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance for 2021. He informed the Board that all College policies, procedures, and documentation had been updated to reflect to KCSIE 2021. He also informed the Board that they would be receiving an email asking them to confirm that they had read KCSIE part 1 and the College's Safeguarding policy.

Turning to the Safeguarding Policy, the Assistant Principal noted that the policy now made it clear that it applied to Members, as well as Trustees, Staff, and students. He further noted the increased emphasis on concern about peer-to-peer abuse, and harmful sexual behaviour.

The draft policy had been discussed with the Link Trustee for Safeguarding and within the SLT.

The Board approved the Safeguarding Policy.

11. TRUSTEE SELF ASSESSMENT

The Board approved the Trustee Self-Assessment Report.

12. LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS

Paul Collyer, as Link Trustee for Career Development, outlined his discussions with the Career Development lead. He noted that, despite the pandemic, students had been offered work placements and that with over 80% of students taking up the opportunities provided, the College had met the GATSBY benchmark.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair thanked Berzek Sanda for her service as a Parent Trustee.

The Chair thanked the Principal and the staff for their work during the busy enrolment period.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for 6pm on 8th December 2021.

*The meeting closed at 7.30pm
Attendance was 60%.*

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

AT1-001	Clarification of the Audit Terms of Reference should be sought from the Director of Finance and Estates.
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SUMMARY OF GOVERNOR CHALLENGE [C] / SUPPORT [S]

C/S	Minute	Topic
C	4	<p>Examination Results</p> <p>The Board questioned whether the College's rigorous approach to the determination of Teacher Assessed Grades had disadvantaged Esher Sixth Form College students, given that there was evidence of significant grade inflation in other sectors.</p>
C	8	<p>Principal's Report</p> <p>The Board questioned the Principal about whether the expansion of provision, following the high level of enrolment, had adversely affected the quality of provision.</p>