



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

PART 1

Wednesday, 29 March 2023 at 6.00pm

Present:

Tim Oliver (Chair)
 Dan Hards
 Natasha Meade
 Mark Nelligan
 Max Nicholson

Declan Mason
 Stephanie Fudge
 Kate Parsons
 Zara Lyons

Terry Price (Member)
 Clarissa Wilks (Member)

David Lavarack (Member)

Helen Odhams, Deputy Principal
 Sagar Patel (Assistant Principal, Student Services)

Anna Mawson (Divisional Director, Maths, Science & IT)
 Catherine Davies (Clerk)

1. PRESENTATION ON THE CURRICULUM

Anna Mawson, Divisional Director, briefed the Board on the College's work and her responsibilities for a third of the curriculum - Maths, Science and IT.

- These subjects are examined in a variety of ways; A Levels, BTEC's and GCSE's. Additionally, the Departments offer a range of complementary study courses that students can choose in addition to the core programme.
- The College is proud of their most recent set of results and in particular Geography where a student achieved the highest result given by the exam board. The College has a record set over several years of being the highest placed non-selective institution in Maths Challenge competitions.
- During the recent Ofsted Inspection, the Biology, Psychology and Geography departments were inspected with positive outcomes.
- The College continues to support CPD and 6 senior leaders are currently studying for an NVQ in Senior Leadership.
- Looking forward to the upcoming exam period the College is aware of the disruptive time the current 6.2 cohort has had throughout the Covid period and the staff have worked hard to ensure the students have been given any extra support required.
- Level 3 reform and its impact on provision are a concern for the College especially regarding the Health and Social Care BTEC.

The Chair thanked the Director for her interesting and inspiring presentation.

2. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of business interests.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Fran Stewart, Ben Obese-Jecty, Paul Collyer. Andy McVeigh and Jane Duscherer did not attend.

4. UPDATE ON EXTERNAL AUDITOR TENDER

The Chair of the Audit Committee updated the Board on the result of the recent tender process for appointment of the College External Auditor. Three Companies submitted tenders in the time frame given and 2 were taken forward to meet with representatives from the Audit Committee and the Director of Finance and Estates. The Audit Committee have endorsed Buzzacott to be recommended to the Members for appointment as External Auditor for the College.

Action: The Members to ratify (by correspondence) the appointment of Buzzacott as External Auditor of the College from 1 May 2023.

(Mark Nelligan left the meeting)

5. CONSTITUTION

- Succession Planning and Recruitment

The Chair updated the Board on the recent response to adverts placed for the role of Trustee. A short list of candidates has been drawn up and interviews will take place in the coming weeks. There is an opportunity for 2 Trustees to join the Board during the Summer Term and 2 more in September. A short list of candidates has also been drawn up for the role of Member, the Board agreed to prioritise Trustee interviews and then turn to Member recruitment.

- Acting Chair for Quality and Standards Committee

The Chair asked Natasha Meade to Chair the meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee on the 27th April 2023 and Natasha accepted the role.

The Chair thanked Natasha Meade for acting as Chair for the Quality and Standards Committee Meeting on 27th April.

- Amendments to Articles of Association

Terry Price outlined the proposed changes to the Articles of Association:

- a) Article 23 to increase the quorum of Members from 2 to 3.
- b) Article 45 to increase the size of the Trustee Board from 15 to 17.

A Trustee asked (in advance of the meeting) if the quorum of Trustees should be increased and Terry replied that Article 117 allows for the quorum to be set as 1/3 of the total number of Trustees.

A Member asked if the Articles of Association could be edited to become a gender-neutral text and the Board agreed to the request.

The Board agreed to approve the amendments to Article 23 and Article 45 subject to the condition of a gender-neutral text in the Articles of Association.

Action: Clerk to instruct the lawyers to re-issue the Articles of Association as a gender-neutral document with the agreed amendments to Article 23 and Article 45.

Action: Clerk to circulate new version of Written Resolution to Members.

6. MINUTES OF THE ACADEMY TRUST MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2022

The Board approved the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting of 7th December 2022.

7. MINUTES OF THE ACADEMY TRUST MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2023

The Board approved the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting of 9th February 2023.

8. MATTERS ARISING

None.

9. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal briefed the Board on College developments:

- The Management Away Day to be held in May will focus on setting objectives related to the digital strategy, timetable consultation, Level 3 Reform and other key areas.
- The College continues to collect information regarding Level 3 Reform and the expected streamlining to the choice of A Levels, T Levels or the apprenticeship route. The SFCA has received a reply from the DfE turning down a request for an additional year for planning and preparation, consequently the College is expecting to reduce its BTEC provision and only offer single BTEC's to be taken alongside A levels. Scenarios for offering T Levels will be planned for and the SLT will continue to revisit the College Mission Statement to ensure it remains an open access and inclusive College. A recent SFCA Principal's meeting highlighted the challenges of introducing T Levels including the difficulty of retaining students over the length of the course, finding suitable work placements and ensuring students pass the qualification at the end of the course.
- During recent industrial action by the NEU the College has remained open and communication with staff and students has been clear and effective. Teacher pay has been topped up in response to the most recent NJC/NEU joint statement.
- Recent recruitment at the College has led to 3 new Heads of Department (3 external) being offered roles and recruitment continues for an additional Head of Department, a Safeguarding Lead role and various teaching roles. A Leadership Development Consultant will be supporting Senior Leadership staff in their new roles.
- Recent budgetary decisions have included updating access control and additional gates to the College and purchasing laptop storage lockers.

A Trustee asked if Staff recruitment/vacancies have recently increased, and the Deputy Principal replied that whilst there hasn't been a noticeable increase in teaching staff turnover what has become apparent is a trend of recruitment throughout the academic year rather than concentrated over late Spring/early Summer. An increased number of student numbers signing up for Business and Economics A levels has led to the recruitment of more teachers in that Department. Whilst recruitment in the current environment is challenging, the trend is being seen across Sixth Form Colleges as a whole. The Deputy Principal added that she is working with the HR Department on a Recruitment and Retention project.

A Trustee asked how the change in SLT has been managed with all staff. The Principal replied that communication with staff has been constant, he has met with all the Department Heads and recently hosted an SLT Q&A. The Deputy Principal added that dialogue with staff has been open and the SLT have ensured their key priorities are communicated in a clear manner. Sagar Patel noted the values of the College have remained the same despite the level of change.

A Trustee asked about the fast-moving development of Artificial Intelligence in an educational setting and the Principal replied it's a constant item on the SLT's agenda and whilst new AI websites are blocked the students do need to be aware of how to use these AI tools.

9.1 Student Union Report

The 2 Student Trustees updated the Board on recently activities at the College which have included a pizza and ping pong event and Eco Clothes swap that raised money for ECAT. The events have been well attended and the SU team is looking forward to handing over to the new reps next term.

9.2 Management Accounts, plus forecast outturn, cashflow and Commentary for 4 and 5 months to 31.12.22 and 31.01.23.

The Board approved the December 2022 and January 2023 Management Accounts and Reports.

9.3 Review of Quality Improvement Plan

The Deputy Principal focused on 3 Points in the plan:

a) Target 1 – The College has been working hard to ensure 6.2 who have had a disrupted education over the past 3 years have the support needed to ensure they are ready for their formal exams this summer. The Deputy Principal reminded the Trustees that it's not clear where the grade boundaries will be set for this year's exams and this uncertainty has made it difficult to set Targets 9, 10 and 11.

b) Target 5 – This target relates to the Ofsted report and the tracking of non-academic outcomes of high needs students. A new system has been developed and amendments made to procedures which have ensured the tracking is both satisfactory for Ofsted and works well for the College.

c) Target 14 – The Oxbridge programme had a change of co-ordinator mid-year and whilst the number of offers achieved this year just missed the target, the co-ordinators hope that next year the newly developed programme will result in the target figure being met.

The Board took note of the Quality Improvement Plan.

10. ADMISSIONS POLICY 2024

The Principal outlined the changes to the policy including incorporating the wording of the appeals process into the policy and the addition of Hampton High as a school with guaranteed admission status.

The Board approved the Admissions Policy 2024.

10. DfE SCHOOL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

The Board approved the DfE SRMSA.

11. REPORT BACK FROM THE COMMITTEESFinance and Estates

The Principal briefed the Board on the Finance and Estates Meeting on the 14th March and highlighted the approval given to the Director of Finance and Estates to draw up plans for a new classroom block and commit to the deposit payments for 2 CIF bid projects.

Strategy and Policy

The Chair briefed the Board on the Strategy and Policy Meeting on 8th March that discussed recruitment and succession planning and the outcomes were detailed earlier in this meeting.

12. LINK TRUSTEE REPORT

None.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair congratulated Kate Parsons on her new role as Assistant Principal.

The Chair thanked Max and Zara for their engagement in their roles at Student Trustees.

The Chair thanked Helen Odhams for her hard work and dedication over the past 7 years at the College.

Helen replied by thanking the Board for their help and support over the years too.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for 6pm on 12th July 2023.

*The meeting closed at 7.28pm
Attendance was 64%*

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

AT4-001	The Members to ratify the appointment of Buzzacott as External Auditor of the College from 1 May 2023.
AT4-002	Clerk to instruct the lawyers to re-issue the Articles of Association as a gender-neutral document with the agreed amendments to Article 23 and Article 45.
AT4-003	Clerk to circulate new version of Written Resolution to Members.

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

C/S	Minute	Topic
S	1	The Chair thanked the Director of Maths, Science & IT for her interesting and inspiring presentation
C	8	A Trustee asked if the level of teacher recruitment was noticeably more active.
C	8	A Trustee asked how staff were feeling about the level of change in the SLT.
S	13	The Chair congratulated Kate Parsons on her new role as Assistant Principal. The Chair thanked Max and Zara for their engagement in their roles at Student Trustees. The Chair thanked Helen Odhams for her hard work and dedication over the past 7 years at the College.