



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

Wednesday, 24 September 2025 at 6.00pm

Present:

Tim Oliver (Chair)
 Dan Hards
 Emma O'Brien
 Liz Gilroy-Scott
 Natasha Meade
 Sophie Cook
 Flora Burrowes
 Mark Nelligan

John Thater (Vice Chair)
 Oliver Schuster (Chair)
 Thea Torosyan
 Mark Aulds
 Jane Duscherer
 Dave Roberts
 Tom Clark
 Claire Douglas

David Irving (Member), David Lavarack (Member), Clarissa Wilks (Member)
 Brian Scott (Member), Divanio Crooks (Member)
 Sagar Patel, Deputy Principal, (Advising Officer), Kate Parsons, Assistant Principal, (Advising Officer), Anna Mawson, Assistant Principal, (Advising Officer)
 Catherine Davies (Clerk)

1. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

Mark Aulds (Parent Trustee) declared an interest as the Link Trustee for Health & Safety at Esher Church of England High School.

Liz Gilroy-Scott (Trustee) declared an interest in a new role from November, Director of Strategic Project Office at Kingston University.

The Chair reminder the Board that all interests must be updated on an annual basis and any change that takes place during the year must be reported to the Clerk and the Register will be updated. A Trustee must also declare any financial or prejudicial interest which may be a conflict at the start of each meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Trustees were present.

3. PRESENTATION ON EXAMINATION RESULTS BY DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

The Deputy Principal briefed the Board on the examination results for 2025.

- Giving an overview of the national picture, the Deputy Principal noted the return to normal grade distribution and the growing regional disparity between London and the SE and the rest of the country. Despite the DfE national spending on the pupil premium, a gap in national attainment remains; a focus on inclusion and disadvantaged students is central to the new Ofsted inspection framework.

- The College has seen an improvement in A Level high grades (60.2%) and pass rates (increase of 1%) and a significant improvement in vocational results.
- The College continues to outperform that National JCQ benchmarks especially for high grades. The BTEC results show a 100% high grade pass mark in subjects such as Music Technology and Performing Arts; these are courses chosen by students with lower prior attainment and often from disadvantaged backgrounds and have additional learning support needs. In the year 2023/24 every BTEC subject had a Departmental Insight Review and the reform of these subjects was evident in the Summer 2025 results.
- The GCSE results from English and Mathematics show the support given to students to achieve these qualifications whilst at the College.
- Turning to ways to measure performance, the College has a value-added score of above average on the DfE performance tables (new data will be published next year). ALPS value added scores place the College in the top 15% of all schools and sixth form colleges and Sixth Sense places the College in the top 20% for value added. The Board noted that the BTEC Diploma in Performing Arts is in ALPS 1 which is the highest level of value added performance.
- Some subjects will be reviewed by the SLT and more details will be circulated to the Quality and Standards Committee.

A Trustee congratulated the College on the excellent GCSE results and asked for more details regarding reaching out to schools to support the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) at GCSE to ensure there are pupils interested in studying the courses at A Level. The Deputy Principal replied that the MFL Department Head has contacted local schools and circulated a newsletter to prospective students. The German School feeds students for German A Level.

A Trustee who studied a MFL at the College asked about Alumni events and the Principal gave an overview of the planned events.

A Trustee asked for more information regarding subjects where the high grade percentage was below the JCQ national high grade percentage such as Mathematics. The Deputy Principal replied that the entry requirements to study some subjects at the College are below the requirements at many sixth forms which makes a comparison with JCQ national benchmarks difficult. The Departments are currently writing their Departmental Reviews and the updates will be considered by the Quality and Standards Committee.

A Trustee asked for more information regarding the JCQ National Benchmarks and Sixth Sense Data. The Deputy Principal replied that the S7 colleges also share data but again the entry requirements for some of the S7 Colleges are higher than the College, making comparisons tricky.

A Trustee asked for an overview of the results performance this year and the Deputy Principal replied that the A level results are the best set of results since A Levels were reformed.

The Chair congratulated the staff and students on the excellent academic outcomes for the year 2024/25.

4. SAFEGUARDING TRAINING PRESENTATION BY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

The Assistant Principal for Student Services and Designated Safeguarding Lead (Kate Parsons) briefed the Board on the latest statutory changes and current safeguarding activity at the College.

- KCSIE 2025 states that Safeguarding and Child Protection is the responsibility of all staff and Trustees at the College and all staff and trustees should have safeguarding and child protection training on an annual basis.
- An overview was given regarding how the College keeps students safe including the roles of the DSL and Safeguarding Team to co-ordinate the recording of disclosures received from staff, parents, other students, external agencies and safeguarding files provided by secondary schools.
- The process for managing a concern was outlined including how a single point of contact is appointed. The concerns are allocated categories ranging from 1-3.
- Online Safety is a priority and internet activity is monitored via Smoothwall and filters are in place including R;pple.
- Due to the location of the College on the borders of Surrey and London, the DSL receives Prevent information from both areas with right-wing ideology and Islamist extremism both being threats.
- All Trustees and Members will be asked to complete Safeguarding Training via the TES portal.

Action: All Trustees and Members will be asked to complete Safeguarding Training via the TES portal.

5. CONSTITUTION

The Chair informed the board that he is stepping down as a Trustee on 25th September.

5.1 Confirmation of the Chair of the Board of Trustees

The Clerk took the chair of the meeting.

The Board unanimously voted to appoint Oliver Schuster as Chair of the Board.

Confirmation of the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees

The Board unanimously voted to appoint John Thater as Vice-Chair of the Board.

The new Chair (Oliver Schuster) took the chair of the meeting.

5.2 Review of Committee Terms of Reference

The Board approved the Terms of Reference for Audit, Finance & Estates, Quality & Standards, Strategy & Policy, Remuneration and Special Committees.

Action: The Chair asked that the Special Committee Terms of Reference be added to the Agenda of the upcoming Strategy and Policy Committee for further consideration.

5.3 Review of Scheme of Delegation

The Board approved the Scheme of Delegation.

Review of Standing Orders

The Board approved the Standing Orders.

Action: The Chair asked that the Standing Orders be added to the Agenda of the upcoming Strategy and Policy Committee for further consideration.

6. MINUTES OF THE ACADEMY TRUST MEETING HELD ON 9th JULY 2025

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting of 9th July 2025.

7. MATTERS ARISING

AT4 – 001 Trustees to verify their identity via the link from Companies House **The Clerk reminded the Trustees to verify their identity with Companies House and email their personal code. This is a legal requirement under the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023.**

8. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

8.1 The Chair thanked the Principal for his written report. The Principal updated the Board with a verbal overview including:

- The Strategic priorities for the coming year include delivering a sustainable and high-quality learning environment for an increased student roll while making the most efficient use of the present resources.
- The new Ofsted Framework has revised areas of evaluation including combining Leadership and Governance.
- DfE upcoming publications include the Post-16 Skills White paper and the final report of the Curriculum & Assessment review; both which will impact the College in terms of vocational provision.
- The enrolment process was successful, and 1199 6.1 students were enrolled. The total number of students projected for enumeration is around 2120 students.
- The new classroom block is complete and Classics and Computer Science have moved into the space.
- The pay agreement for Support Staff should be confirmed shortly. Negotiations continue for Teaching Staff.
- The College is fully staffed for September.

A Trustee asked for more details regarding the enrolment process in September 2025 and the board discussed the choice pupils make between staying at their school and moving to a sixth form college.

The Chair asked for diversity data for the recently enrolled 6.1 students and the Principal replied this is reported in the appropriate SAR but he can provide LAC and EHCP numbers in due course.

The Chair asked for more information regarding the impact of the teachers pay award on the budgets and the Principal replied that the budgeted figure is in line with the figure being negotiated by the National Joint Council.

The Chair welcomed the new staff to the College.

8.2 Review of Quality Improvement Plan

The Deputy Principal introduced the Quality Improvement Plan and highlighted the following Targets:

Targets 1-3: The targets to achieve an A level high grade rate of over 60% was achieved and the SFC benchmarks for BTECS should also be exceeded. The pass rate for A level of 99% was not achieved but was increased by 1% compared to the previous year.

Target 19 : The Assistant Principal, Kate Parsons, updated the Board regarding the draft Communications Strategy and initiatives taken to improve communications with parents. This target is partially achieved.

9 POLICIES

9.1 Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

The Assistant Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead (Kate Parsons) briefed the Board on changes to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2025 and noted the points relating to Bully and Harassment have been moved to a new policy. The proposed Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill will impact this policy in the coming year.

The Board approved the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2025.

9.2 Bullying & Harassment Policy for Students

The Board approved the Bullying and Harassment Policy for Students and noted this is a new policy and will be approved by the Strategy and Policy Committee going forward.

A Trustee asked for more details regarding reporting a concern to a tutor and the Assistant Principal gave an overview of the different reporting pathways.

10 TRUSTEES' SELF- ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Board approved the Board of Trustees Performance Review for the Academic Year 2024/25.

The Clerk updated the Board that the Trustee's QIP will be circulated at the next Board meeting.

11 SFCA OPPORTUNITY – BEYOND THE AGENDA

The Board agreed to this proposal.

Action: Clerk to contact SFCA to take up this opportunity.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Principal thanked Tim Oliver for his service to the Board for over 9 years and as Chair for 8 years. He has steered the College through academisation, the pandemic, an Ofsted Inspection graded Outstanding and expansion of the estate.

A Member thanked Tim Oliver for his service.

The Chair thanked the Parent Trustee, Dave Roberts, for his service as his term ends in November.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Thursday 11 December at 6.00pm

*The meeting closed at 7.30pm
Attendance was 100%*

Signed and date

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

1	All Trustees and Members will be asked to complete Safeguarding Training via the TES portal.
2	The Chair asked that the Special Committee Terms of Reference be added to the Agenda of the upcoming Strategy and Policy Committee for further consideration.
3	The Chair asked that the Standing Orders be added to the Agenda of the upcoming Strategy and Policy Committee for further consideration.
4	Clerk to contact SFCA to take up this opportunity.

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

C/S	Minute	Topic
C	3	A Trustee asked for more information regarding the JCQ National Benchmarks and Sixth Sense Data
S	3	The Chair congratulated the staff and students on the excellent academic outcomes for the year 2024/25.
C	8	The Chair asked for diversity data for the recently enrolled 6.1 students
S	12	The Principal thanked Tim Oliver for his service to the Board
S	12	The Chair thanked the Parent Trustee, Dave Roberts, for his service as his term ends in November.