

## Newham Sixth Form College

### Governing Body

#### Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2015

**Present:** Gail May (Chair), Meg Dabasia, Christopher Owens, Jessie Robinson, Jay Nair, Shazia Ali-Webber, Claire Blakemore, Susan Landeryou, Aniqah Begum, Mariam Oluwasbusayo Ajibola, Eddie Playfair

**In attendance:** Ray Ferris (Vice Principal), Arthur Hasler (Director of Finance and Resources), Nick Christoforou (Director of Studies), Alfred Cardona (Head of Quality, Learning and Teaching), Paul Baglee (Clerk)

Apologies for absence were received from Rania Hafez, Chinye Jibunoh, Allison Locke and Tracy Oko (Director of Student Services).

#### 1. Election of Chair

The governors elected Gail May as Chair for the term of office ending at the first autumn term meeting in 2017.

#### 2. Election of Vice-Chair

Following Gail May's election as Chair, the governors elected Jay Nair as Vice-Chair, for the term of office ending at the first autumn term meeting in 2017.

**Action:** the governors agreed to consider the re-introduction of the second Vice-Chair position at the next meeting.

#### 3. Student success rates 2014/15 and proposed targets 2015/16

The governors received and considered a report on the performance against targets in 2014/15 and the proposed targets for 2015/16.

The governors were advised that the overall success rate had risen from 84.3% to 85.3% but was 0.7% below target. College performance was 1.3% above the average success rates for all post 16 providers, but 0.7% below the sector average for sixth form colleges. AS-level performance had improved significantly with a 3% rise in success rates and a 4% improvement in A\*-C passes. A-level performance remained unchanged at 95%, but there had been a 5% improvement in A\*-C passes. There had also been significant improvements in level 3 advanced vocational courses, with a 7% improvement in success rates.

The governors were further advised that performance in level 2 courses had fallen. There had been a 7% decline in level 2 vocational courses. The governors were reminded that the challenges faced by introduction of external assessment had been previously reported and the results in all courses following the new BTECs had fallen. There had also been a significant decline in the proportion achieving grade A\*-C in maths from 42% in 2014 to 24% in 2015 based on a much larger number of entries. The success rates for level 1/2 Use of Maths had reduced. English GCSE results had

improved from 27% to 37% A\*-C, and the overall GCSE (grades A\*-C) performance had fallen from 58% in 2014 to 52% in 2015. The governors noted that further analysis was being carried out to determine the reasons for the decline in GCSE maths performance.

The governors were provided with details of the value-added scores. They were advised the Advanced Level Performance System (ALPS) data had shown that value added had improved for A-level and BTEC, with AS-level remaining the same. The proportion of students achieving their targets at A-level and AS-level had improved by 5% and 6% respectively. The data also showed that the proportion of BTEC students achieving their targets had fallen by 1%. However, this excluded those taking the 90 Credit course and did not affect the ALPS grading. The governors noted that the college was not content with its ALPS ratings and would seek to improve these to the higher end of the grading scale. They also noted that there would be further analysis of the results by gender and disability because of the widening gaps.

In terms of the proposed targets for 2015-16 the governors were advised that these had been set using the following criteria:

- Where success in 2014-15 was below the national averages, the national average becomes the target for 2015-16
- Where success in 2014-15 was slightly below the national average then the target for 2015-16 becomes national average +3%
- Where the success in 2014-15 was above the national average then maintenance of that achievement becomes the target for 2015-16.

Therefore the overall success rate target would be 87% (the sixth form college sector average) and the college was confident that this could be achieved.

#### **Governors' questions** (*responses in italics*)

- a. Why have the maths GCSE results fallen so significantly? Colleges are required to enter students for English and Maths GCSE if they have not attained an A\*-C pass. It was previously possible to enter students who needed to attain a higher grade pass in both English and Maths for one GCSE at a time, but this is no longer the case. Therefore the number of students taking the exam doubled in comparison to 2014 and the projected performance was over-estimated. We will analyse these results further for a deeper understanding of the performance levels.*
- b. Is setting targets at or below national averages being sufficiently aspirational? We are aiming to improve the performance in all courses, but this recognises that greater levels of progress need to be made in some courses. Overall we are looking to push ahead of the national averages for the sixth form college sector.*
- c. Given the performance at GSCE Maths is a success rate target of 42% sufficient? This would represent a significant increase in performance, but if governors think the target should be higher a new target could be set.*
- d. Should the level 3 vocational target be more ambitious? If governors think this target should also be higher this can be considered.*

**Decision:** the governors agreed to accept the report and adopt the 2015/16 targets (below); subject to the targets for level 3 vocational and GCSE higher grades being increased and re-presented to the next meeting.

## NewVlc top level targets 2015-16

		2014-15 Actual SR%	2015-16 SR% Targets**	Based on
Overall college long level success rate target % (excluding Functional Skills)		85%	87%	SFC NA
Long level 3 success rate (excluding functional skills)		88%	88%	SFC NA
	A-level	95%	96%	SFC NA
	AS-level	81%	83%	SFC NA +1%
	Other : level 3 advanced vocational	89%	To be resubmitted	SFC NA+1%
Long level 2 success rate (excluding functional skills)		72%	85%	
	Other : level 2 vocational/ higher project	66%	85%	
	Use of Maths level 2	68%	80%	
	GCSE Higher Grades	35%	To be resubmitted	
Long level 1 success rate (excluding functional skills)		77%	85%	
	Use of maths level 1	69%	80%	
Functional Skills		56%	TBC	NA = 65%
	English level E1to L1	84%	88%	
	Maths level E1 to L1	84%	84%	SFC NA +1%
	ICT level E1 to L1	68%	80%	
	English level 2	34%	51%	

\*\* All targets for 2015-16 are based on SFC averages and on 'All institution averages if the latter are higher.' Where national averages are low, minimum aspirational targets are set

#### 4. Presentation on the college inspection framework

The governors received and accepted a presentation on the new Ofsted common inspection framework and the implications for governing bodies.

## 5. Post inspection action plan

The governors received and noted an update report on the post inspection action plan.

### **Governors' questions** (*responses in italics*)

- a. What steps are being taken to improve the lesson observation profile? *The lesson observation profiles prior to the inspection were over-inflated. The assessment is now more focused on learning. The profiles are more accurate and a wide range of professional development support has been used to enhance learning and support the teachers who need to improve. There will be a detailed review of the lesson observation profiles for the Quality Link Governors meeting in January 2016.*
- b. Does the 25% of lessons that are assessed as requires improvement or inadequate match up to the courses that require improvement? *There is a connection, but some of the teaching and learning on successful courses is assessed as grade 3 (requires improvement). A college profile of 70% to 75% good or outstanding lessons could be close to a grade 2 (good) judgement in an inspection. Ofsted does not publish its observation profile, but inspectors match their data to the college profile to assess whether it is comparable.*
- c. How are the college's performance management arrangements supporting improvements in the quality of teaching and learning? *Different levels of support are triggered depending on the internal assessment and there is evidence of improved performance as a result of interventions over the last year, but we will report back on this in more detail at the next meeting.*
- d. Will the action plan be updated following the self-evaluation review? *Yes, the action plan will be updated.*

**Action:** report on performance management arrangements and the impact of interventions to be reported to the next meeting.

## 6. Principal's report

The governors received and considered the report of the principal.

### **a) Key performance indicators 2014/15**

The governors noted that the position remained as previously reported. The college had underachieved in the recruitment of 16-18 year olds by 80 students and had suffered a consequential loss of income in 2015/16.

### **b) Funding allocation for 2015/16**

The governors were reminded that the college had experienced a reduction in income of £567,241 or 3.7%. It had appealed against the £110k reduction in disadvantaged funding to the Education Funding Agency (EFA). This appeal had been unsuccessful and there was a lack of clarity about why the EFA had chosen to use less accurate data. The EFA had undertaken to use college data when making the 2016/17 allocation.

**c) Student achievement and progression headlines for 2014/15**

The governors noted that the achievement headlines had been covered in earlier reports. They were pleased to receive the progression headlines. These showed that 770 students (81% of the cohort) had progressed to university, with 91% of applicants being successful. 90 students had progressed to Russell Group universities. These figures represented the college's best ever performance. The governors noted that a full destinations report would be presented to the next meeting.

**d) Enrolment 2015/16**

The governors were advised that the college had enrolled 2681 students against its internal target of 2686. However, this had fallen to 2550 against the funded target of 2558. The Principal anticipated that by the consensus point the number of students was likely to fall further so that there would be a shortfall of about 20. This would equate to a further loss of income of £100k in 2016/17. An interim recruitment analysis had shown that the number of students on honours programmes had fallen. These were the students for whom there was the fiercest competition locally. The college remained the largest provider of A-levels in the borough. The governors further noted that decisions would need to be made on whether the college should seek to recruit some additional part-year learners in January 2016 to close the funding gap.

**e) Area based reviews**

The governors were advised that the government had established a system of area based reviews. London was identified as single area with four or five sub-regions and with an overarching panel chaired by the Mayor of London and sub-regional panels chaired by SFC and FE commissioners. Increased college mergers were a likely outcome of the reviews.

The Principal explained that governors would play a key role in the reviews and there was an expectation that governing body chairs should be key representatives at panel meetings. NewVIc could make a strong case as a college, but developing secure and meaningful partnerships was a key to success. There were already strong links between the 12 sixth form colleges in London and these would need to be developed further. The reviews would be carried out alongside a comprehensive spending review of the further education budget. This was an element of the education budget that was not protected so there could be significant reductions. The position would be clearer following the government's funding announcement on 25 November 2015.

It was noted that any recommendation about the future of the college would need to be considered by the governing body and could only be taken forward with its approval.

**f) 2014/15 development plan**

The governors received and accepted the final version of the 2014/15 development plan showing the performance against each target. Where targets had not been met, the reasons for under-performance were recorded in the plan.

**g) Philip Dewe**

The governors wished to place on record their immense gratitude for the work of Philip Dewe, until recently, Chair of Governors. Philip had been taken ill during the summer and, although he had made a good recovery, he had decided to retire from Birkbeck, step down from the governing body and relocate to Australia, where his wife was working. As these events had happened so quickly there had not been an opportunity for a formal farewell from the governing body, but the Principal, Clerk, senior staff and colleagues had been able to attend Philip's retirement event to pass on thanks on behalf of governors. The Principal expressed his personal appreciation for Philip's support. The governors echoed the Principal's sentiments.

**7. Review of courses requiring improvements**

The governors received and accepted an update report on courses requiring improvement and noted that further updates would be provided during the year.

**Governors' question** (*response in italics*)

*Have the senior leadership meetings with parents been useful? These meetings have been a useful means of having a challenging and supportive conversation and providing a reality check for the students and their parents about the consequences of a failure to make improvements.*

**8. Emerging strengths and areas for improvement**

The governors received and noted a report on the college's emerging strengths and areas for improvement. They were advised that these would be contained more fully in the self-assessment review.

**9. Annual report on learner voice**

The governors received and considered the annual report on learner voice.

The governors were advised that the college had a dynamic and energetic approach to developing learner voice across a range of initiatives. Learner voice had a positive impact in revising practice in some learning areas, but responding to feedback needed to be more joined up. A comprehensive review had been undertaken and 10 recommendations identified based on the findings.

**Decision:** the governors welcomed the report and agreed the recommendations.

**10. Annual report on safeguarding**

**Decision:** the governors received and accepted the annual report on safeguarding and agreed that it should be submitted to Newham Council.

**Decision:** the governors also agreed that Shazia Ali-Webber should replace Gail May as link governor for safeguarding.

**11. Link governor reports**

The governors were advised that the first Quality Link Governors meeting to review the 2015 exam results had taken place on 6 October 2015. Further link governor visits had been held and the visit reports would be available for the next meeting.

## 12. Review of committee and sub-group membership

The governors received and considered a report on committee and sub-group membership.

**Decision:** the governors agreed to retain the current committees and sub-group with the following membership:

<b>Audit</b>	<b>Search</b>	<b>Campus Masterplan</b>
Jonathan Birdwell (Chair)	Gail May (Chair)	Gail May (Chair)
Shazia Ali-Webber	Jessie Robinson	Jay Nair (Vice-Chair)
Meg Dabasia	Eddie Playfair	
Jay Nair		
Daniela Jung (co-opted)		

## 13. Governing body self-assessment review

The governors received and noted a report on the governing body self-assessment review.

**Decision:** the Clerk should prepare a draft report on the governing body self-assessment review for initial comments by email and final approval at the next meeting.

## 14. Provisional revenue and capital budget 2014/15 outturn

The governors received and accepted a report on the provisional revenue and capital budget 2014/15 outturn.

The governors were advised that the provisional balance sheet showed a small operating deficit of £10k. A number of contingencies had been released with the agreement of the financial statements auditor and the Local Government Pension Scheme deficit was higher than anticipated. The audited accounts would be submitted to the next meeting.

## 15. Campus masterplan update

The governors received and noted an update report on the campus masterplan phase one and phase two.

The governors were advised that phase one had encountered its first significant problem. Works to install a gas supply were behind schedule because the permissions needed to make the connection across Prince Regent Lane were delayed. This had put the project completion date back by three weeks, but it was hoped that this time could be clawed back if the winter weather was mild. The contractor had submitted a penalty claim which could affect the budget. The governors noted that a fuller report would be submitted to the next meeting. This report would be confidential because of its commercial sensitivity.

The governors were asked to contribute to the planning for the opening of phase one. The early ideas were set out in the report and the governors were invited to submit their views and ideas to the director of finance and resources.

#### **16. Review of risk register**

The governors received and accepted the review of the risk register. They noted that there was little change since the last review and that student recruitment remained the key risk.

#### **17. Health and safety update**

The governors received and noted a health and safety update.

#### **18. Minutes of the audit committee meeting held on 14 September 2015**

The governors received and noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 14 September 2015.

#### **19. Internal audit annual report 2014/15**

On the recommendation of the Audit Committee the governors accepted the internal audit report 2014/15. The governors noted that the opinion of the internal audit service was that the college has adequate and effective management, control and governance processes in the areas reviewed that should enable the college to manage the achievement of its objectives.

#### **20. Search Committee – 13 October 2015**

The governors were advised that the Search Committee had asked the Principal and the Clerk to begin the search for candidates for the independent governor vacancy with a background in strategic management and an understanding of the London skills agenda. The committee had also agreed a skills audit analysis form and this would be circulated to governors for completion.

#### **21. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2015**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2015 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

#### **22. Meeting dates 2015/16**

The governors agreed the following meeting dates:

Autumn Tuesday 1 December 2015 (to start at 6.00 pm for a training session on preparing for Ofsted)

Spring Tuesday 9 February 2016                      Tuesday 22 March 2016

Summer Tuesday 17 May 2016                      Tuesday 5 July 2016

With the exception of 1 December 2015, all meetings to start at 6.30 pm