

Newham Sixth Form College

Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2017

Present: Gail May (Chair), Jessie Robinson, Julia Shelton, Joanne Dean, Terry Paul, Jay Nair, Samira Islam, Rayon Walters, Allison Locke, Mohima Khan, Stephen Appiah, Eddie Playfair

In attendance: Ray Ferris (Vice Principal), Tracy Oko (Director of Student Services), Nick Christoforou (Director of Studies), Alfred Cardona (Head of Quality, Learning and Teaching), Abena Rodman-Tay (Finance Manager), Paul Baglee (Clerk)

Apologies for absence were received from: Meg Dabasia, Airey Grant and Diana Pogson (interim Director of Finance and Resources). Apologies for lateness were received from Jay Nair and Samira Islam offered apologies as she needed to leave the meeting early.

1. **Declarations of interest**

Eddie Playfair declared an interest in the review of senior postholders' pay and performance (minute no. 23 refers) and withdrew from the meeting during this item. There were no other interests declared.

2. **Membership**

Samira Islam withdrew from the meeting while her appointment was considered.

Decision: on the recommendation of the Search Committee, the governors agreed to appoint Samira Islam as an independent member with immediate effect.

The governors were sad to learn that Meg Dabasia was seriously ill and that she would be unable to attend any meetings for at least the next three months.

Decision: the Principal to contact Meg to pass on the governing body's best wishes for a full recovery.

Decision: Joanne Dean to be appointed as a member of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee until the membership was next reviewed, and the clerk to contact other governors to seek additional members.

3. **Presentation on actions to improve GCSE English and GCSE maths**

The governors received a presentation on the actions to improve GCSE English and GCSE maths. They also looked at sample examination questions for both subjects.

The governors were reminded that attaining GCSEs in English and maths at grade C or above was critical for student progression and employability. In 2016, 29% of the students taking the exams achieved grades A*-C in maths and 31% in English. This was above national average, but below the sixth form college average. However, the new progression measures for both subjects were above the sector average.

Student motivation remained a significant challenge and attendance at classes was a cause for concern. Some students had failed the exam twice and had low confidence. Colleges had no discretion and were required to enter all students with a grade D in either subject for the GCSE. There was no alternative qualification that might be better suited to students' needs, consequently numbers were high with a total of 1216 studying these subjects. This was almost 50% of all students.

The college had taken a number of actions to improve attainment. Classes were carefully timetabled to maximise attendance. There were now three, one hour lessons a week as opposed to two, one and half hour lessons and the feedback on this change was positive. The skills for life strategy highlighted the significance of these GCSEs and there were themed meetings for course managers to improve teaching techniques. Also there were more re-sits - of the 111 students taking the exams in November, 18 had achieved A*-C in English and 19 in maths.

Governors questions' (*responses in italics*)

- Why aren't students doing additional work outside of the classroom? *Largely because they don't like the work. Students are given access to MyMaths and Maths Watch, but don't make frequent use of these on-line programmes. Maths now spends one lesson a week on practice. Students have shown an improvement and will hopefully become more motivated to work outside of the classroom as a result.*

Request: Joanne Dean asked to be sent the links for these programmes.

- Are GCSE resits only for students with a grade D? *Students entering the college with lower grades study functional skills maths in the first year and progress to GCSE in their second year. There are also a small number of overseas students who would not have taken the GCSE before.*

4. Principal's report

The governors received and considered the report of the Principal.

a) Key performance indicators

The Principal confirmed that the college had overachieved on student numbers by 23 and their age profile would provide for higher income levels in 2017/18. The adult number target had not been achieved. In response to a question, the governors were advised that as adult numbers were relatively small, this was not something that the college would target resources to redressing.

b) Planning for 2016/17

The governors were advised that the college would receive notification of its 2017/18 income from the Education Funding Agency by the end of February 2017. With the further cut in disadvantage funding and the increase in student numbers, the college anticipated that net further reductions of £200k would be required. This was sustainable and would not prevent the college from achieving its key objectives. This included moving staff onto the new SFCA pay scales. In response to a question, the governors noted that there would be a financial impact from moving onto the new pay scales, but this was contained within the budget. They were pleased to learn that there were tight controls on establishment numbers.

c) National performance tables 2016

The governors were advised that the national performance tables for 2016 had been published. They were provided with extracts showing the performance of London sixth form colleges and colleges in Newham compared to NewVIc.

The governors noted that the college was at or above national averages for Applied and General Technical qualifications and below average for A-level points and progress. The college was the largest sixth form college in London for Applied and General Technical qualifications and GCSE English and maths entries.

d) Newham Collegiate Sixth Form Centre City of London Academy

The governors received a proposal for consultation from the City of London Academies Trust to open Newham Collegiate Sixth Form Centre as a City of London Academy from September 2017. The closing date for response was Friday 17 March 2017.

Decision: the governors agreed that the Principal should prepare a draft response in discussion with the Chair and for review by all governors before being submitted.

The governors were also advised that the Trust had agreed to speak with the Principal about partnership opportunities. In response to a question he explained that he would be prepared to consider a strategic partnership that would avoid duplication of provision and protect minority subjects.

5. Area review final report

The governors noted that the area review final report would be circulated when it was published.

6. Quality improvement action plan

The governors received and noted the updated quality improvement plan.

The governors asked that the outcomes of future governors self-assessment reviews be included in the quality improvement action plan (minute no. 14 refers).

In addition, the governors recognised that the City of London Academies Trust's plans to expand Newham Collegiate Sixth Form Centre from 600 to 800 places created a strategic risk for the college. To respond the college acknowledged that A-level attainment and value-added need to be improved to attract higher achieving A-level students.

7. Learner voice update

The governors received and considered an interim report on the on-course survey to January 2017.

The governors were advised that the survey was still running to maximise the number of responses. Of the responses received so far, 89% of students agreed that they had been made aware of the Prevent Duty and 95% agreed that they had learned about British Values. It was noted that teaching and learning satisfaction rates has also improved. The governors were reminded that the college was able to drill down into individual course of programme areas to access the qualitative responses.

The governors were also advised that appropriate arrangements would be made to extend the survey to the foundation learning students.

8. Courses requiring improvement

The received and considered an update report on the courses requiring improvement.

The governors were advised that there had been a lot of activity around supporting GCSE English and GCSE maths, particularly to improve attendance. The governors noted that the predicted pass rate for English GCSE was 18% and not 9% as shown in the report. Standard Monitoring Assessment 3 was scheduled to take place on 20 February 2017.

Governors questions' (responses in italics)

- The report indicates that programme team managers report to SLT on under-performing courses twice a year, is that sufficient? *Heads of Schools meet with programme team managers more often to review progress. The frequency of these meetings is determined by the level of risk. For example weekly meetings are taking place for Travel, Tourism and Sport.*
- How do attendance levels in English and maths break down between classes? Are students less likely to attend classes if there is a long period between lessons? *We have yet to carry out this type of analysis. There have been mixed views about the new timetable, and we are listening to the views of staff and students. However, a long break between classes is not an acceptable reason for missing a lesson.*
- Who are the students that miss English and maths lessons? *A disproportionate number of level 2 students miss lessons largely because they lack motivation and confidence. Where students are a cause for concern letters were sent out at the end of last term and meetings have been held with parents. Some students were better able to see the connection between attaining an English or maths GCSE and their planned career paths as a result of these meetings. Level 2 students with poor attendance had been warned that they would not be permitted to progress to level 3 courses.*

The governors agreed to note the report and were complimentary about the level of detail.

Request: governors asked that an all-course data summary sheet be included in future reports ahead of the individual course data.

9. Travel, Tourism and Sport update

The governors received and considered an update report on Travel, Tourism and Sport. This learning area had been assessed as 'inadequate' based on the 2015/16 results.

The governors were advised that the courses were been closely monitored. Weekly meetings were taking place with the interim manager who was appointed in January 2017. Performance projections indicated that four of the six courses will meet or surpass national averages. That would be sufficient to raise the self-assessment grade, but further improvements were required to reach 'good'.

Governors' questions (*responses in italics*)

Why has attendance dropped in Level 3 Travel and Tourism? *A course conference was due to take place on 8 February 2017 and attendance must improve. I'll find out (Ray Ferris) why attendance dropped.*

How does the college decide if a course should be discontinued? *Consideration is given to discontinuing courses if there is an extended trend of low recruitment, achievement or value-added.*

Request: governors asked that a themed learning walk of these courses be organised for governors.

10. Monitoring visit action plan

The governors received and accepted an update report on the monitoring visit action plan.

The governors were reminded that the action plan was dynamic and that the next version would be presented to the governors' task/finish group meeting on 22 February 2017. The governors were advised that a peer review of the college's work would be carried out through the London Sixth Form College Partnership.

The governors asked that Allison Locke's name be added to task/finish group membership on page 11 of the report.

11. Annual report on staffing and performance

The governors received and accepted the annual report on staffing and performance.

The governors were advised that since the report was prepared a BME manager had left on promotion to another college, so the proportion of managers from a BME background had reduced.

Action: the governors asked that future annual reports provide data on sickness levels, the number of disciplinaries and grievances and performance management completion rates so that this could be benchmarked.

12. Annual report on compliance with SEND code of practice

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

13. Student destinations – additional data

The governors received and accepted a report providing additional data on student destinations from 2015/16.

Action: the initial student destinations report to be provided to new governors.

14. Governing body self-assessment

The governors received and accepted the governing body self-assessment report.

Decision: the governors agreed that the governing body self-assessment process should be aligned to college self-assessment process, with the first assessments carried out at the summer term development day.

15. Link governor reports

The governors received and considered a report on the link governor arrangements.

The governors also received a report from Joanne Dean on her attendance at the AoC London Region Parliamentary Reception on 30 January 2017. They were pleased to note that Joanne had spoken to Robert Halfon, the Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships, and invited him to visit the college. This had been followed up by the Principal to issue a formal invitation.

Decision: the governors agreed that Terry Paul should be appointed as safeguarding link governor and that Julia Shelton and Samira Islam (subject to her agreement) should be appointed as quality link governors. All other link appointments should remain unchanged.

Action: the Head of Marketing to be invited to make a presentation to the governing body (the Brand and Reputation link vacancy still to be filled).

16. Scrutiny process

Decision: the governor received and accepted the Audit and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations for carrying out its scrutiny function.

It was noted that scrutiny themes would be commissioned by the governing body and the committee would then establish the terms of reference and identify any resource implications. Scrutiny themes would be considered at the summer term development day.

17. Campus masterplan update

The governors received and accepted an update report on phase one of the campus masterplan development.

The governors were advised the works were close to completion and that handover was now due to take place on 27 February 2017. Arrangements for formal opening ceremonies would be made once handover was confirmed. It was noted that the dispute with the contractor had still to be finally resolved.

The governors thanked the senior leadership team for their work in delivering the building project in addition to their normal duties. The Principal thanked Diana Pogson for her work in leading the project since her appointment as interim Director of Finance and Resources.

18. Risk management update

The governors received and accepted a risk management update report and commented positively on the layout of the risk register.

19. Lloyds Bank facilities letter

Decision: at the request of Lloyds Bank the governors agreed a resolution to accept an amended facility letter relating to the loan of up to £3 million to part fund phase one of the campus masterplan. It was also agreed that the Chair should sign the resolution on behalf of the governing body.

20. Health and Safety update

The governors received and accepted a health and safety update report.

Request: the governors asked that health and safety key performance indicators be developed and reported on. These could be incorporated into the governing body self-assessment process.

21. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2017 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

22. Minutes of the meeting of the search committee held on 6 December 2017

The governors received and noted minutes of the meeting of the Search Committee held on 6 December 2017.

The governors were advised that the review of meeting day and start time preferences would be carried out now that new governors had been appointed.

23. Review of senior postholders' pay and performance

The Principal, staff and the student governor in attendance withdrew for this item.

The governors remaining noted that the meeting was inquorate and could not determine the recommendations of the Search Committee in relation to the pay of the Principal and Vice Principal. As this matter could also not be considered at the last meeting, the governors remaining agreed that the Search Committee's recommendations should be considered and that if there was unanimity other governors would be advised that the Chair was minded to take Chair's action to approve the recommendations unless there were any objections.

The governors were advised that the review of the Principal's performance was conducted by the Chair of the corporation. The review of the Vice-Principal's performance was conducted by the Principal. The governors noted that the Search Committee had endorsed the Chair's recommendation that the Principal's targets for 2016/17 be accepted but, in light of the outcome of the Ofsted monitoring visit, he should not be awarded an increment. The committee had reviewed the Principal's report on the performance of the Vice-Principal and agreed to endorse his recommendation that, in light of his performance in 2015/16, the Vice-Principal be awarded an increment.

The committee had agreed that the governing body be asked to accept these recommendations.

***Decision: the governors agreed that the Principal's targets for 2016/17 be accepted but, in light of the outcome of the Ofsted monitoring visit, he should not be awarded an increment.**

*** Decision: the governors agreed that, in light of his performance against the 2015/16 appraisal targets the Vice-Principal should be awarded an increment.**

Action: clerk to contact the independent governors not in attendance to advise them that the Chair is minded to take Chair's action to implement the decisions marked * unless there are any objections.

24. Meeting dates 2016/17

The governors agreed the following meeting dates:

Spring Tuesday 28 March 2017

Summer Tuesday 16 May 2017

Tuesday 4 July 2017

All meetings to start at 6.30 pm

Summer development day

Saturday 10 June 2017