

Newham Sixth Form College

Governing Body

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2016

Present: Gail May (Chair), Christopher Owens, Jessie Robinson, Chinye Jibunoh, Rania Hafez, Terry Paul, Shazia Ali-Webber, Jay Nair, Claire Blakemore, Mariam Oluwasbusayo Ajibola, 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), Paul Baglee (Clerk)

Apologies for absence were received from Meg Dabasia, Jonathan Birdwell, Susan Landeryou, Allison Locke, Aniqā Begum and Arthur Hasler.

1. Declarations of interest

Eddie Playfair declared an interest in the review of senior postholders' pay and performance (minute no. 2 refers) and withdrew from the meeting during this item. There were no other interests declared.

2. Review of senior postholders' pay and performance

The principal, staff and the student governor in attendance withdrew for this item. The governors remaining received and considered a report from the search committee setting out the principal's proposed targets and the vice principal's targets for 2015/16.

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 2015/16 be accepted and that, based on his performance in 2014/15, he should 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 2015/16 be accepted and that, on the basis of his performance in 2014/15, he should be awarded an increment. The governors also agreed to note the vice principal's targets for 2015/16.

Action: the governors asked that future reports include target completion dates.

At the conclusion of this item the principal, staff and the student governor re-joined the meeting.

3. Presentation on Area Based Reviews

The governors received and considered a presentation on area based reviews.

The governors were advised that area based reviews were a national programme to review the post 16 sector, excluding school sixth forms, to maximise value for money and to create viable, sustainable, resilient and efficient institutions. It was anticipated that the reviews would lead to mergers and that there would be fewer FE colleges at the end of the process.

There was a Pan-London steering group chaired by the mayor and four sub-regional groups below this. The college was in the East region and this review was scheduled to take place from April to July. There were six further education colleges in the East region and four sixth form colleges. The governors noted that mergers were already planned between further education colleges and that the sixth form colleges had some experience of working together. There were no restrictions on forming partnerships or merging with colleges from different regions.

The review process was structured over five meetings and the output was a costed shortlist of recommendations. The governors would respond to these but were not bound by them. Academy conversion could be considered as part of this process. Final information on the implications of academy conversion for sixth form colleges had still to be published, but there were opportunities for the college to lead, form or join a multi academy trust. Currently academy conversion could only be approved as part of the area review process. This would require the corporation to be dissolved and a new Trust formed. Any new 16-19 academy scheme would be funded on the same basis as schools, so this meant that VAT could be reclaimed, but there would be restrictions on borrowing. The college's adult work could continue.

The governors were advised that the potential options included the creation of a stronger London sixth form partnership and the creation of a multi-academy trust with a number of local schools. The London sixth form partnership could include all 12 of the sixth form colleges in London and would focus on shared services and quality improvement with minimal implications for governance. The creation of a multi-academy trust would have more significant implications for governance, but could provide for partnerships with other sixth form providers, secondary schools and primary schools.

Governors' questions (*responses in italics*)

- a) What data will be used to inform the area review? *The review will use data in the public domain. The review timetables are tightly drawn and there will be limited time for expert analysis.*
- b) What would the curriculum offer look like if the college was in a multi-academy trust? *We would be able to develop a more continuous curriculum and create 11-18 pathways.*
- c) What could we lose if we were part of a multi-academy trust? *The college's Ofsted judgement and its financial health puts it a strong position. We have no need to merge and that provides the opportunity to draw up a compelling proposition in which the college would play a key role. Becoming an academy would reduce our level of autonomy, our ability to borrow and reduce our identification with the further education sector.*

The governors considered these options and discussed the potential impacts in broad terms. The governors acknowledged that the final decision would be taken by the governing body and they started to outline a series of principles (set out below) that articulated the college's core beliefs and could be used to support the analysis of area review recommendations or partnership opportunities.

- Any partnership must be a partnership of equals
- There should be sufficient autonomy to provide for better education
- The college should be proactive and not predatory in seeking to form partnerships
- The college's inclusive ethos must be maintained

Decision: the governors agreed that the options set out in the presentation should be further explored.

Action: a further report to be presented on the review programme at the next meeting and how governors would be involved. It was noted that additional meetings might be required.

4. **Principal's report**

The governors received and considered the report of the principal.

a) Key performance indicators 2015/16

The governors received and noted details of the college's performance against the key indicators in 2015/16. They were advised that for the second year running the college had not achieved its recruitment targets. This would have a negative impact on its income in 2016/17.

b) Performance tables 2015

The governors received and noted a summary of the college's performance as shown in the 2015 national performance tables that were published on 21 January 2016. The governors were advised that average A-level points per student were down a little, but the average vocational points per student had increased. When the two scores were combined the college was just above the national average (102%). The college was pleased with this level of performance, but recognised that A-level value-added needed to improve.

c) Planning for 2016-17

The governors were advised that the college had received its draft allocation from the Education Funding Agency. The disadvantaged factor had fallen dramatically and could lead to a reduction of £532k or 23.9% in this income line. The college was exploring this calculation with the Education Funding Agency and the possibility of transitional funding. The final allocation would be known by the end of February and the college was working on making overall savings of 8% for budget planning purposes.

d) NewVlc 2020: principles, strategic aims and behaviours

The governors received the final college principles, strategic aims and behaviours that had been developed following wide consultation with all stakeholders, including governors.

Decision: the governors agreed that the NewVlc 2020 principles, strategic aims and behaviours should be adopted.

It was noted that a launch event would be held on 16 March 2016 and that all governors would be invited to attend.

e) Summer term development day

Decision: the governors agreed that the summer term development day should be held on Saturday 11 June 2016 and that the programme should not be determined until the recommendations flowing from the area based review were clearer.

f) Minutes of stakeholder groups

The governors received and noted the minutes of the stakeholder groups.

5. Post inspection action plan

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

The governors were reminded that the action plan was a dynamic document that had been updated to include the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted for the college to be assessed as outstanding.

Governors' questions (*responses in italics*)

- a) Can the QDP survey results be analysed by different cohorts, so that satisfaction levels for stretch and challenge can be assessed by teaching group for example?
We will consider how the data can be analysed differently by looking at specific groups.
- b) Which curriculum areas had lessons observed by external consultants? *Six lessons were observed in maths, with five being assessed as grade 2 and one as grade 3. Travel & tourism will also be reviewed. The quality link governor group had also met to look at the quality of teaching and the outcomes in-year observations in more detail.*

6. In year lesson observation update

The governors received and noted an update report on in-year lesson observations.

The governors were advised that as at 26 January 2016, 33 lessons had been observed and graded and there had been three upgraded observations as part of a pilot to refocus the observation process onto developmental aspects. Further graded observations had taken place since the report was published and currently 72% of lessons were assessed as grade 1 or 2.

The observation findings were being used to further develop teaching and learning. In maths the observations had identified that, although the teaching was good, there was insufficient consolidation of learning. This needed to be addressed for the attainment target of 50% GCSE A*-C grades to be achieved. A full range of additional support continued to be provided. This included training workshops, one to one coaching support. An observation database was about to be launched which would provide for more efficient reporting and follow-up support.

Governors' question (*responses in italics*)

a) How are teachers chosen for lesson observations? *Every teacher has an annual lesson observation and follow-up is managed in proportion to their support requirements. We can add this information to future reports to provide a fuller picture.*

7. In year progress against targets

The governors received and accepted a report on the college's progress towards the 2015/16 attainment targets.

The governors were advised that the latest projection of overall performance was made following the third (of four) standard monitoring assessments. Following adjustments for predictive accuracy, if performance was at the top end of expectation it was predicted that the success rate for "overall long" courses would be 93%. If performance was in line with expectations the success rate was predicted at 87% and if performance was below expectations, the success rate was predicted at 85%. The governing body's target was 87% and the college predicted that this should be achieved.

The report contained summary data and a comprehensive spreadsheet providing performance information for each course. Governors were asked to indicate if the spreadsheet was helpful, so that a decision could be taken whether to include it with future reports.

Action: governors to comment on the usefulness of the spreadsheet.

8. Courses requiring improvements

The governors received and accepted a report on the courses requiring improvement.

The governors were advised that the report was compiled following standard monitoring assessment (SMA) 3, but not all data was uploaded prior to publication. Further data had been added at there was now a SMA completion rate of 98% for almost all courses.

Attaining grades A*-C for English and maths was a high priority with a target of 50% for both subjects. After SMA 3 the pass rate in English was 54%, but only 14% in maths. The governors were advised that this was a cause for concern. The college was confident that the right support was in place, but that more now needed to be done to address students' individual needs.

The governors were also provided with the updated attainment data for new courses. They were pleased to note that there were high levels of attainment for almost all of these courses.

Governors' question (*responses in italics*)

- a) What type of individual support will you provide for GCSE maths students? *There is already an element of individual target setting and this is used as a basis of providing one to one support. We also make clear the significance of attaining a maths GCSE to students on the basis of their chosen pathways.*

Action: the governors asked for a report on GCSE maths attainment to be presented to the next meeting.

9. Governor involvement

The governors received and considered a report on governor involvement. The report showed the expected level of engagement for each link governor appointment.

Decision: the governors agreed that they remained committed to the link governor arrangements and the levels of engagement required.

Action: consideration to governor involvement in area reviews would be given at the next meeting.

Action: link governor appointments showing the relevant senior leadership team link to be re-circulated

10. Link governor reports

Action: the governors noted that a number of link governor visits had been carried out and that the reports would be submitted for the next meeting.

11. Annual report on staffing and performance

The governors received and accepted the annual report on staffing and performance and noted that this was linked to the annual report on equality objectives (minute no. 12 refers).

The report provided a profile of the workforce and the governors were advised that further work was needed to increase the number of managers from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. The college's commitment to staff development remained, although it was noted that financial pressures had led to reductions in the staff development budget.

12. Annual report on equality objectives

The governors received and accepted the annual report on the college's progress towards achieving its equality objectives.

The governors were advised that this was the final report on the current set of objectives, as new objectives were due to be set by April 2016. There were seven objectives and progress towards them was summarised as follows:

1	Further increase representation of black and minority ethnic (BME) staff at management level	Little or no progress
2	Continue to equip staff with skills and confidence to tackle all equality and diversity issues in the classroom	Good progress
3	Ensure there is a more balanced representation of specific groups on college courses	Little or no progress
4	Review the accessibility to all aspects of college life to ensure all students have fair and equal access to involvement or progression	Good progress
5	Continued monitoring of college success rates for specific groups to ensure no significant difference between groups is maintained	Some progress
6	Processes for staff and student consultations, feedback and evaluation to be reviewed and strengthened	Good progress
7	Develop and deliver a strategy to raise awareness of and reduce prejudice and discrimination against LGBT staff and students	Some progress

The governors were advised that objective 1 would be carried forward. Analysis had shown that the college was not attracting sufficient BME candidates. Further work would be carried out with marketing to provide for more balanced representation of specific groups on college courses.

Action: new equality objectives to be presented at the next meeting, with a greater proportion of SMART targets.

Action: governors to contribute to this process by completing and returning a diversity questionnaire.

13. Annual report on compliance with SEN/D code of practice

The governors received and accepted the first annual report on the college's provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEN/D).

The governors were pleased to note that the progress of SEN/D students was improving and the attainment gap had been reduced. They were advised that the report will be reviewed in more detail with link governors for equality and diversity.

Governors' question (response in italics)

- a) How are emerging needs assessed? *Where additional needs are identified, students are internally assessed. This could lead to a referral to external agencies for further assessment. Staff are made aware of assessment outcomes so that students can be appropriately supported.*

14. Student destinations – additional data

The governors received and accepted a report providing additional data on student destinations in 2015.

The governors were advised that 80.2% of students had been contacted. The majority (61.7%) progressed to higher education, with 91% of all applicants successfully obtaining a place. This increased to 93% of all applicants for vocational students. The numbers moving into apprenticeships was relatively low at 1.5% and reflected the number of higher level apprenticeship opportunities in London.

Governors' question (*response in italics*)

- a) What does the college do to encourage students to attend university outside of London to build their resilience? *An increasing number of students are leaving London to attend university and the number of NewVlc students attending Russell Group universities has doubled. However, financing university places outside of London remained a significant barrier for a large number of students.*

15. Campus masterplan update

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

The governors were advised that good progress continued to be made and plans were now being prepared for the opening ceremony to reinforce the college's reputation in the local and education community.

The governors were also advised that the campus masterplan steering group had accepted the recommendation of the college's advisers that the loan offer from Lloyds Bank should be accepted.

Decision: the governors agreed to confirm the steering group's decision to accept the loan from Lloyds Bank and to consider a formal resolution in this respect at the next meeting.

Action: the governors asked that clarification be sought on the impact of academy conversion on the loan.

16. Risk management update

The governors received and considered an update report on risk management.

The governors were advised that at the request of the audit committee the risk register now included an entry for terrorism and other related threats.

Decision: the governors agreed to accept the updated risk register.

17. Health and safety update

The governors received and noted an update report on health and safety.

The governors were advised that there were no major incidents to report.

18. Appointment of an independent governor

The governors accepted the recommendation of the search committee and appointed Joanne Dean as an independent governor.

19. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2015 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the chair.

20. Meeting dates 2015/16

The governors agreed the following meeting dates:

Spring Tuesday 22 March 2016

Summer Tuesday 17 May 2016

Tuesday 5 July 2016

All meetings to start at 6.30 pm

Summer development day

Saturday 11 June 2016