**The Corporation of Newham Sixth Form College**

**Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 September 2023**

**Members**

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| Julia Shelton (Chair) | Independent Member | Present |
| Mandeep Gill | Principal & Chief Executive | Apologies – ill health |
| Trevor Harris | Staff Member | Present |
| Aleeza Hasaan | Student Member | Apologies – personal commitments |
| Jane Lofthouse | Independent Member | Present |
| Ebby Maps | Parent Member | Present |
| Matthew Odeyemi | Student Member | Apologies – College commitments |
| Martin Rosner | Independent Member | Present |
| Mandeep Sahotay | Independent Member | Present |
| Elizabeth Scott | Independent Member | Present |
| Yolanda Valery | Independent Member | Apologies – work commitment |

**Non-Members in attendance**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Susanne Davies (known as Davies) | Interim Principal and Interim Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality Student | Present |
| Suzzanne Datta | Executive Director Human Resources & Organisational Development | Present |
| David Francis | Executive Director Student Services | Present |
| Sue Hadfield | Interim Executive Director Teaching & Learning | Present |
| Robin Jones | Head of Governance | Present |
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**1 MANDEEP GILL, PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE, AND APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERIM PRINCIPAL**

The Committee noted, with much regret, that Mandeep Gill was currently away from College due to a period of ill health.

Members agreed to place on record their very best wishes to Mandeep and to hope that he was back to good health very soon.

In the meantime the Corporation had agreed, via Written Resolution, to appoint Susanne Davies as the Interim Principal until further notice.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed the Interim Principal to her first meeting.

It was explained that as there was already a Suzzanne and a Sue in the SLT the Interim Principal would be known as Davies in the College.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, also welcomed Sue Hadfield to her first meeting following her enagment as Interim Executive Director Teaching & Learning.

**2 MEMBERSHIP OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Committee noted that the Corporation would confirm the membership of the Committees for 2023/24 at the meeting on 11 October 2023.

At this time the Committee noted the following new Members who would be joining the Curriculum, Quality and Engagement Committee:

* Aleeza Hasaan – Student Member
* Matthew Odeyemi – Student Member
* Trevor Harris – Teaching Staff Member

At this early part of the meeting none of the new Members were present due to College commitments although it was hoped that at least two of them would join in the next few minutes.

**3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Committee NOTED that:

* as previously reported Mandeep Gill had submitted his apologies due to ill health
* Matthew Odeyemi, one of the Student Members, had submitted his apologies for absence due to College commitments
* Yolanda Valery was unable to attend due to work commitments.

During the meeting Members were informed that Aleeza Hasaan had submitted her apologies due a personal commitment.

The meeting was quorate throughout.

**4 TREVOR HARRIS – TEACHING STAFF MEMBER**

At this point Trevor Harris, the new Teaching Staff Member, joined the meeting having had a College commitment.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed Trevor to his first meeting.

**5 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Members confirmed that there were no declarations of interest to be recorded on this occasion at this stage of the meeting based on the published Agenda.

**6** **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 JUNE 2023**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 15 June 2023 were agreed to be a correct record.

**7 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 JUNE 2023**

The Committee agreed that there no issues to be addressed from the Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 15 June 2023 which were not covered in the published Agenda or in planned actions.

**8 ENGAGEMENT WITH STUDENT MEMBERS**

In the absence of both Student Members on this occasion it was noted that both the Chair of the Committee and Chair of the Corporation would be arranging to attend some of the future meetings of the Students’ Union and Student Council to hear directly from students on issues of interest and concern to them.

Note: Jane Lofthouse arrived during the following item on the Safeguarding Update

**9 EXAMINATION OUTCOMES AND KPIS – 2023**

The Committee received the report relating to examination outcomes in 2023 and an update on the KPIs

Particular attention was drawn to the College wide student achievement rate of 77.3% which had to be viewed in the context of the target of 84% set in November 2022. The contributing factors were noted to be:

* Retention 90.2% (target 92%)
* Pass rates 85.7% (target 92%)
* Attendance 83% (target 89%)
* Punctuality 95% (target 95%)

The data presented also covered A Levels, Level 3 Vocational, GCSE Maths and English. Level 2 (non GCSE) and Foundation Learning.

The position with regard to value added was highlighted for both A Level and Level 3 Vocational. The target set in November 2022 for both categories of students was a value added of 6 but the actual was 8.

The anticipated adverse impact of the industrial action and strikes by members of NEU proved to be right in terms of student achievement.

It was stressed that the data continued to be reviewed before final submission to the ESFA and it was possible that there may be some marginal changes.

Members were advised that the College was drilling down into the achievement and other data to develop a range of strategies to bring about improvements in outcomes and these would be the subject of rigours monitoring and staff would be held to account. The initiatives being progressed included catch up sessions some of which were provided over the summer period.

In looking at the KPIs spreadsheet as a whole Members recognised the most aspects were coloured red which indicated the disappointing differences between the actuals and the targets for 2022/23.

The Committee then reviewed the summary of performance by area of the College.

The Interim Principal explained that the national averages currently related to 2018/19 and these had not been updated since due to the impact of the Covid pandemic. Clearly NewVIc was performing below the national average but it would not be known for some months the extent when the national data was collated and published. On the basis of the most recent data for NewVIc the overall achievement was, as mentioned earlier, 77.3% with the historical national position being 86.0% or a difference of 8.7%.

Given the marked differences between some of the areas of the College, such as Sport and Performing Arts & Music, Members asked why some are doing better than others? This was due, it was explained, to some areas being more assignment based than examination.

There was also some good results within the IT Area which was why it was necessary to drill down to individual courses which was part the managers were doing at present.

Whilst not wishing in any way to micro manage the review of the outcomes from 2022/23 or the actions to be taken as a result to bring about improvements, Members thought it essential to have a clear understanding of the position and also to ensure that the College celebrated relative successes.

The Executive Director Teaching & Learning acknowledged the point made by Members and confirmed that the College and individual area SARs and the associated Quality Improvement Plans would draw out the performances and the actions being proposed to address the need for improvements. A spreadsheet would be shared with Members.

The Committee then turned attention to the actions being taken to address the challenges faced by the College to improve the quality of the student experience.

One focus would be on improving value added. The College needed to look for significant improvement in 2023/24 over 2022/23.

As with all improvement plans the starting point was to have a clear idea of the current position and then to agree on where the College wanted to get to and how. This would involve rigours checks throughout the year and holding individuals and teams accountable.

A Member asked about the position for the Honours Project as it seemed that there were only 5 students involved. It was confirmed that there was a deep dive at present and the outcome would be made known to Members.

A Member expressed the view that, based on the achievements reported at this meeting, there was very little to celebrate on this occasion. Furthermore, it was thought that, whilst it did have a significant impact, it was not appropriate to attribute all of the poor outcomes to the industrial action as not all areas of the College were as seriously affected by the strikes. It was thought by the SLT that during the past couple of years during the period of industrial action there were some mangers who did not enforce compliance on their staff. This was now being addressed. Management development sessions were being provided with the intention of improving the learning experience and the overall College environment. Improving staff morale was also seen to be a priority.

A Member reiterated the point made earlier in the discussion as to the importance of knowing where the College needed to be in terms of improving outcomes by developing a clear action plan. It followed that leadership was the key with a priority being to ensure that staff have the skills to make the progress that was required.

Finally, a Member asked about the presentation of data so that Members had a clear understanding of the position for the various equality groups including looked after children and by disadvantaged factors. It was confirmed that the relevant parts of the EDI Annual Report for 2022/23 would be presented to the Committee at the next scheduled meeting.

The Committee agreed, after a wide ranging discussion:

1. To note the reports presented on the examination outcomes for 2023 and the KPI update including the NewVIc performance relative to the latest available data on the national achievement rates
2. To look forward to receiving at the next meeting and then subsequent meetings the outcomes from the deep dives and drilling down into performance together with the actions plans to bring about improvements in the quality of the students learning experiences leading to improved achievements in 2024 and beyond
3. To note at the next scheduled meeting on 16 November 2023 the Committee would receive for consideration:
   1. the draft College Self-Assessment Report
   2. the draft Quality Improvement Plan and the student related aspects of the EDI Annual Report for 2022/23
   3. the Six Dimensions Report which would show the NewVIc performance benchmarked against other sixth form colleges and highlight the distance to be travelled to bring about real improvements in the student experience and outcomes

**10 EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS**

The Committee received a comprehensive Action Plan for the period September 2023 to August 2024 which addressed:

* Area for development
* Lead in the College organisation
* Action/controls
* Progress update
* Deadline

Members were advised that it had been found that there had been an inconsistent use of the processes which were in College and which should have been followed and there was a less than rigours quality assurance procedures. The position had been made known to the examination awarding bodies by College “whistleblowers” and as result there had an investigation.

A Member asked for an explanation of what were the issues and the Committee was told that, in all honesty, the management of examinations, particularly in January 2023, could only be described as chaotic,

The Committee agreed:

1. To note the report on the comprehensive Examination Action Plan as presented
2. To note the information provided by the Executive with regard to the actions on the “whistleblowers” to make known College processes to the examination awarding bodies
3. To look forward to receiving for monitoring and discussion the updated Action Plan at future meetings in 2023/24 so that progress against the intentions set out could be tracked by Members

The Head of Governance noted that the term “whistleblowers” had been used during the discussion and, as a result, he would address with the Executive (initially the Vice Principal Finance & Operations) if the issue needed to be made known to the Audit & Risk Committee given the role and responsibilities for whistleblowing set out in the Committee Terms of Reference which reflected the national requirements placed on such committees.

**11 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The Committee received the Quality Improvement Plan for 2022/23 as updated to reflect the end of year position.

Members recognised that the QIP update had been prepared by the former Interim Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality who has maintained some contact with NewVIc.

The QIP showed the progress made against the targets set at the start of the year 2022/23 using a RAG rating of red = not achieved, amber = partially achieved and green = achieved.

The cover report for the QIP stated, and Members acknowledged, that, whilst it was clear that there was a genuine desire and intent to do things, the implementation was made very difficult due to the industrial dispute, strikes and other factors. There was no doubt that failure to achieve or partly achieve most of the quality targets set out in the QIP have presented the College with challenges to assess and monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in 2022/23.

The Committee agreed after discussion:

1. to note the final QIP for 2022/23 which was important in that showed the range of issues not addressed due to various factors but mainly the impact of the industrial action and strikes in 2022/23 which were recognised by Members
2. to look forward to receiving the QIP for 2023/24 following the validation of the College SAR for 2022/23 which would draw on the QIPs for all areas of the College so that there were clear actions to be taken and which could be tracked so that the Executive could be held to account
3. to request the Executive to review the presentation of the formant of the QIP so that it was more user friendly when being considered and discussed – a move from landscape to portrait may be helpful to all concerned.

**12 SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT – 2022/23**

The Committee received and discussed the comprehensive Safeguarding Annual Report for 2022/23 together with the Safeguarding Action Plan for 2022/23 and the Safeguarding Action Plan for 2023/24.

The Annual Report included a statistical analysis of the number of students being supported by the Safeguarding Team – following a sharp increase in 2021/22 over 2020/21 there was a fall back in numbers in 2022/23 (119, 212 and 187 in the 3 years).

There was also an analysis of the number of Looked After Children who had been supported by the College in 2022/23 – 28 in total of which 22 had completed their course successfully.

The staff training in safeguarding and related themes had continued in 2022/23 with all but 100% of staff having undertaken what was required.

As part of the commitment to raise awareness of safeguarding and related issues across the College, all editions of the College Bulletin include a relevant section and every time a member of staff turned on their PC there was a safeguarding related prompt.

The Annual Report also covered the number of students who had required support for mental health reasons. This was growing as was being seen in most if not all colleges.

It was pleasing for Members to learn that the College was able to work in partnership with a number of other organisations external to the College for the benefit of students.

The discussion on the Safeguarding Annual Report and related matters ended with an acknowledgement that there was a perception on the part of some students and staff that safeguarding in its widest sense was not as strong as it needed to be. For example in the most recent survey it was found that 18% of students who responded said that they did not feel safe in College. This related mainly to particular areas of the College since when the Youth Safety Team has been established and their role includes regular patrols of the College buildings and grounds such as the designated purple zones.

The reference to Ofsted concerning safeguarding at NewVIc was mentioned. The College was found by Ofsted not to have a case to answer.

The Committee agreed after discussion:

1. to receive and note the Safeguarding Annual Report for 2022/23 and the associated Action Plans for 2022/23 and 2023/24
2. to acknowledge that the work undertaken by the Safeguarding Team was both challenging and extremely important for the College and to thank the staff for all that they do to support students
3. to note, with interest, that the new child protection online monitoring system was now in use and it was thought will bring real benefits in the arrangements for the support of students
4. to invite the Executive Director Student Services to discuss with the Vice Principal Finance & Operations the opportunity to provide additional financial resources to support the Safeguarding Team to help more students, particularly those affected by mental health conditions, and to inform the Finance & Resources Committee on 17 October 2023 as to the intentions

The Head of Governance advised the Committee that the Safeguarding Annual Report would be made available to all Members of the Corporation via the Governors Access Area on the College website.

**13 COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT – 2022/23**

The Committee received and noted a brief summary of the complaints received in 2022/23 and AGREED to look forward to receiving the full and comprehensive Annual Report at the next scheduled meeting.

A Member asked that when preparing the Annual Report a note of explanation be included so that all concerned were clear as to what was meant by, for example, “closed”.

**14 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2023/24**

The Corporation NOTED the dates of the scheduled meetings for the remainder of 2023/24:

* Thursday 16 November 2023
* Thursday 7 March 2024
* Thursday 13 June 2024

It was recognised that other meetings will be arranged if and when thought to be appropriate to address issues falling within the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

The Head of Governance would seek to identify the best time for the Student Members to be able to attend future meetings of the Committee whilst recognising that their course commitments were the priority.

The Head of Governance also reminded Members that at the future meetings the Agendas would include a Student Report and it would be appropriate if the Student Members to be able to present this themselves so as to discuss the issues.

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