Minutes of the Corporation meeting  
Monday 16 March 2015

Membership:  Mark Carroll, (Vice Chair), Hannah Chapman, Lewis Coakley, Coral Decourcy, Steven Crane (Vice Chair), Liz Daniels, Pat Edwards (Chair), David Hatchett, Katherine Hewlett, Taiyyabah Ijaz, Jessica Kamara, Arshed Mahmood, Ian Rogers, Lukmaan Variawa, Kevin Watson, Gavin Williams

In Attendance:  Gill Burbridge: Vice Principal, Teaching, Learning & Student Achievement  
Dawn Hamilton-Barrett: Vice Principal, Staffing, Resources & Infrastructure  
Chris Price: Vice Principal, Wider Student Experience

Clerk: Val Bartlett

Observers to the meeting:  Assia Abassi (Prospective Parent Governor)  
Ian Phillips (National Leader of Governance)

*Denotes apologies for absence

The Corporation agreed that Assia Abassi (a prospective Parent Governor) and Ian Phillips (a National Leader of Governance) may observe this meeting.

49. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CORPORATION

49.1 The Corporation was reminded that since September 2014 numerous attempts have been made to attract two Parent Governors and that one application has now been received from Arshed Mahmood.

49.2 The Corporation ratified the appointment of Arshed Mahmood as a Parent Governor (unopposed) with immediate effect until 31 July 2015.

49.3 The Corporation was reminded that further to the resignation of Zaf Aslam (Staff Governor teaching) this vacancy and the details of how to apply for this position were was announced to staff on 25 February 2015. One nomination was duly received by the Clerk to the Corporation by the deadline date; namely Taiyyabah Ijaz.

49.4 The Corporation ratified the appointment of Taiyyabah Ijaz as the Staff Governor teaching (unopposed) with immediate effect for a 4 year term until 15 March 2019.

49.5 It was noted that Members of the Search Committee had very recently interviewed four candidates with regard to the current two vacancies for Governors.

49.6 The Chair of the Search Committee informed Governors that having taken into account the results of the most recent Corporation Skills Audit and the identified ‘gaps’ including audit and financial expertise in particular, the skills and knowledge of Joshua Arnold and Alex Jackson were considered by the Committee to be appropriate to the Corporation’s current requirements and, therefore, the Search Committee wished to recommend their appointments for an initial one year term with immediate effect.

49.7 It was noted that both of these candidates had been introduced to the college by the School Governors’ One Stop Shop (SGOSS).
The Corporation approved the appointments of Joshua Arnold and Alex Jackson as Governors for an initial term of 1 year with immediate effect.

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

50. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

52. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2015

The Minutes were agreed as a true record.

53. MATTERS ARISING

53.1 Minute 48 – Corporation Conference
The Corporation noted that the conference is to be held offsite on Friday 24 April 2015 from 9:00am and will end with a Dinner.
The draft Conference Agenda is to be further refined following the feedback from the strategic debate which was to be held later this evening.

53.2 Minute 45.6 – Public Value Statement (PVS)
Governors had discussed a draft PVS at the Corporation meeting on 2 February 2015 where it was agreed that additional time be given to further reflect on the draft statement which was to be represented to the Corporation meeting on 14 March 2015 for approval. However, following further discussion it was agreed that a PVS now may be a natural output of the forthcoming strategic conference. In addition, the Clerk informed Governors that that the Foundation Code is currently under review and it may be that the necessity to have a PVS be optional.

54. LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST – POST-16 PARTNERSHIP
The Principal updated the Corporation on the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF Post-16 Partnership).

54.1 Governors were reminded that the issue of more local schools now offering or considering post 16 provision had previously been discussed with the view appearing to be that more schools will follow the recent and successful applications from Lammas and Norlington to provide post-16 education and that the Council will, in all likelihood, not discourage this approach.

54.2 It was acknowledged that the debate regarding schools with sixth forms will continue.

54.3 The Principal informed Governors that the Borough is to fund a ‘Schools Challenge’ in order to specifically target Key Stage 4 in order to improve the Borough wide results.
The Head of Holy Family (who was possibly to have taken the lead role in the Partnership from September 2015) is to take a leading role in this Challenge and, therefore, if the Principal now continues to lead the Post-16 Partnership for a further year, the prospect for a useful synergy between both groups may be thought to be advantageous.

54.4 In addition, the Principal informed Governors that Cllr Rusling has indicated that there is to be a review of post-16 education in the Borough in order to identify where the gaps in the current provision are. Whilst the Partnership is well placed to lead on this, it will also require significant external input in order to ensure ‘buy-in’ from all parties.
54.5 It was then noted that Holy Family School has recently re-considered any future involvement in the post-16 Partnership and that, due to financial pressures and taking a lead in the Schools Challenge, they have formally written to the Partnership to indicate that they are to withdraw as from the end of this Academic Year. The Principal indicated that it may be that other schools in the Partnership may now also withdraw too. In addition, interest from other schools in joining the Partnership may now not be as forthcoming either.

54.6 The Corporation concurred that the Partnership is now at a cross roads regarding collaboration and considered thought will be needed as to what future purpose the Partnership may offer.

54.7 Governors then debated the above in further detail and the following observations were noted in particular:

- The decision taken by Holy Family reflects, in part, the in-built issues within the Partnership and a competitive environment and that whilst the school(s) may withdraw, the colleges have this choice too
- It may be that a different model/format now needs to be created
- There is potentially the capacity to form other alliances and it may be worth exploring the links with colleges outside of the Borough e.g. there is currently a ‘loose’ group of 6 relatively local Sixth Form Colleges which continue to hold quality review meetings
- The Partnership may be used as a model to demonstrate to other institutions how to drive up quality improvement
- A break-up of the Partnership would result in a loss of an additional source of income for the college

54.8 The point was also made that in order to work towards ‘outstanding’, the college can readily demonstrate impact through its engagement with other institutions.

54.9 The Principal highlighted that the college is becoming more and more research engaged including its Post Graduate courses, Quality Improvement Projects (QIP’s), ongoing staff development activities and using practice which is rooted in theory and, therefore, this best practice may be shared both within and outside of the Borough through collaboration.

54.10 The Chair thanked the Principal for his report and the Corporation is to be kept updated on the Post-16 Partnership with further debate to be had at the forthcoming Corporation conference.

55. SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT – HALF YEAR REVIEW
The Vice Principal, Teaching, Learning and Student Achievement reported on the above.

55.1 Governors were informed by the Vice Principal that mid-year reviews of all curriculum areas had taken place at the beginning of last week.

55.2 Good progress overall was reported to Governors with significant improvements in Science and Business in particular. However, there are some concerns regarding Humanities which, whilst demonstrating a good start to the Academic year, has then been subject to two unexpected long term staff absences.

55.3 Governors noted the self-assessment profiles of the Curriculum areas with the VP indicating that the expectation is that these are the grades which each area will at least achieve and some may do even better. All Curriculum Areas are now self-assessing as a grade 1 or 2 apart from Humanities which is 2/3.
A Governor queried the published Performance Tables regarding the average number of points per student as the college’s position in this table is not favourable. By way of response it was acknowledged that the college’s average point score per entry at A level has increase to 195.8 from 193.4 in 2012/13. Translated into a grade this equals C-. Only one London Sixth Form College, Woodhouse, can do better than this (average entry grade = B). For BTEC, the average entry grade is D- and only Coulsdon College is doing better in the whole of the London college sector.

The college is above the national Sixth Form benchmark for overall success rates at 86.9% compared to 86.6%.

All concurred that there are many different measures, that one measure can militate against another and that they are not always self-affirming.

A Governor queried what the biggest risks may be to students when there is long term staff absence for a critical period of time (Minutes 55.2 refers). Reassurance was provided that the college does ensure there are sufficient resources in place including additional support, extra revision classes, workshops and additional staff where appropriate to safeguard that students do not feel they are disadvantaged.

The Chair thanked the VP for her report and the reassurance that there is a robust and credible process in place which helps forecast the anticipated curriculum area grades.

The Chair asked that thanks be passed on to all staff for a job well done.

The Corporation then discussed the mid-year review of the self-assessment of Governance Action Plan.

The Chair highlighted the three issues in the Action Plan and provided an update:

- Strategic direction – this is now being progressed with assistance from a National Leader of Governance (NLG)
- No Grade 3 Curriculum Areas – as per the VP’s report, no area is now self-assessing as a grade 3
- Governors support of the college – It was acknowledged that Governors need to work harder outside of meetings to become more involved in the ‘life of the college’. By way of an example, it was noted that Lewis Coakley (Governor) had met with the Vice Principal Wider Student Experience to discuss the student voice, however, all concurred that there was more for Governors to do.

The Corporation noted the update on the mid-year reviews of the college self-assessment report and also the Governance Action Plan.

FINANCIAL ISSUES
The Principal reported on the above.

The Corporation was informed that the Education Funding Agency (EFA) has recently issued their funding allocations to colleges for 2015/16 and the college is to receive £11,850,877 compared to £10,868,495 in 2014/15.

The programme funding for the College has, therefore, increased by £465,000 (4.3%) despite the removal of the mitigation for the reduction in funding of 18 year old students. This increase is in line with forecasts that had been previously produced.
It was acknowledged that the increase in the retention factor itself indicates the benefit to the college of the work which has been done with students to keep them on their course of studies. Work is now starting on the 2015/16 budgets which will take into account changes to the curriculum with regard to the linear A Levels. The budget will be presented to the Corporation for scrutiny and approval in June 2015.

All concurred that the college is in a very healthy financial position compared to some other colleges who are struggling and, therefore, having to make cuts in staffing, curriculum and enrichment activities. It was noted that 11 sixth form colleges currently have financial concerns and that the Sixth Form Colleges’ Commissioner is aware of this and may be called upon to intervene where necessary.

The Principal pointed out that where this is the case, financial issues will dominate all agendas and, therefore, Governors should not underestimate the importance of having strong finances.

The Corporation received and noted that the monthly management accounts to 31 January 2015 show an estimated surplus on operations of £126,000 which is slightly higher than the surplus of £114,000 which was approved by the Corporation in July 2014.

The Corporation noted the financial update.

**GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

The Clerk reported on the above.

Due to the recent turnover of Governors, membership of the Committees now needs to be reviewed.

The Corporation approved the following Committee membership for 2014/15 and 2015/16:

**Audit Committee:**
Gavin Williams (Chair), Steve Crane (Vice Chair), Joshua Arnold, Mark Carroll, Alex Jackson

**Remuneration Committee**
Pat Edwards (Chair), Liz Daniels, David Hatchett, Gavin Williams

**Search Committee**
Lewis Coakley (Chair), Mark Carroll (Vice Chair), Hannah Chapman, Coral DeCourcy, Katherine Hewlett, Arshed Mahmood, Ian Rogers, Kevin Watson

The Corporation response to the draft English Colleges’ Code of Good Governance was noted.

Steven Crane, Liz Daniels and Val Bartlett had all attended the AoC/ETF Governance Summit on 4 March 2015. The themes at this conference included Ofsted, local employers, LEP’s, Prevent and Safeguarding.

In addition, following a networking conversation at this summit, the suggestion was made by a Governor that there could be named Governors to share priorities in order to progress any issues between meetings and then provide an update report to the Corporation.

The Chair informed all that he had attended a BIS Ministerial Reception on 4 March 2015 which was held in order to recognise the work of Governing Bodies.

The Corporation noted the update on Governance issues.
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

March 26 2015 – RSA/AoC/ETF – 1pm – 4pm ‘How diverse Boards can ensure better FE’

10 and 11 June 2015 – College Progression Fair

STRATEGIC DEBATE – CORPORATION CONFERENCE

59.1 The Chair informed Governors that the information to be gathered from this evening’s session was to be used to help inform the debate at the forthcoming strategic conference on Friday 24 April 2015.

59.2 The Chair reminded all that the college has been successful in accessing funding from the National Leaders of Governance (NLG) in order to help facilitate the strategic discussion at the meeting this evening and also at the conference.

59.3 Governors had been previously asked to complete an unnamed SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of the college.

59.4 The NLG then provided a presentation to the Corporation regarding the role and duties of Governors.

59.5 This was then followed by a presentation on potential areas of possible SWOT’s for the college itself and the sector in general.

59.6 Following the presentation Governors then finalised their individual SWOT responses which the Clerk is to collate ready for discussion at the conference on 24 April 2015.

59.7 The Chair thanked Ian Phillips for his useful and thoughtful presentation.

The meeting closed at 20:35

These minutes have been agreed as a true record.

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Signed                                      Date

Dates of future meetings:
Conference - Friday 24 April 2015
Monday 18 May 2015
Monday 29 June 2015