

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Queen Alexandra
Sixth Form College Committee of Tyne
Metropolitan College held at 5.30 pm on Tuesday
4 November 2014 in Room H112 of the Hawkeys
Building**

Present: Prof Mary Dunning, Governor TyneMet (Committee Chair)
Mr David Bavaird, Associate Member
Mr Jim Coltman, John Spence Governor
Mr Tim Downing, Associate Member
Mr Ian Gordon, Governor John Spence
Mr Syd Johnson, Norham Governor
Ms Sophia Puliasis, Associate Member
Mr Jon Vincent, Principal TyneMet
Mrs Tracy Hush, Head Teacher Norham High School
Mr Jim Stephenson, Head Teacher John Spence
Ms Lydia Wysocki Associate Member
Ms Helen Bower Associate Member

In attendance: Mrs Rosamund Moore, Clerk to the Corporation
Mrs Audrey Kingham, Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Business Development
Mrs Denise Bolton, Head of Queen Alexandra Sixth Form College

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm]

ACTION

1. Welcome and Introductions

Committee Chair Prof Dunning welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

The Principal explained the reason for the meeting room change which was due to the work being undertaken to allow access to the Hawkeys building roof for maintenance purposes. As this was a grade 2 listed building, the College had ensured all work complied with preservation regulations. The Principal gave assurance that there was no disruption from a student perspective and that most teaching occurred in the Millennium building.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Mr Fran Done, Mr Peter Smith, Ms Christine Smiles, Mr Karl Ward (retrospectively) and Mrs Crozier.

3. Declarations of interest and possible resolutions

Prof Dunning, in the confirmation of her as Committee Chair. Mr Bavaird, as a recently Co-opted Governor of Norham High School.

4. Confirmation/appointment of Committee Chair and Vice Chair:

The Committee endorsed the appointment of Prof Dunning as Committee Chair for 2014/15. The Vice Chair position would be confirmed at the next meeting.

**Agenda
17 March**

Committee Membership: Governors and Associate Committee Members:

The Clerk to the Corporation anticipated that Marden High School would provide a replacement Governor for Mr Rudd by the time of the March meeting.

Mrs Bolton highlighted the fact that there had been a number of students interested in the role of Associate Member and that in order to gain the nomination Ms Puliasis had been through a selection process.

The Committee agreed to the appointment of Ms Sophia Puliasis to the Committee until the end of the academic year, i.e. 31 July 2014.

Prof Dunning reminded Committee members that they had agreed to an Associate Member nomination from each of the three local universities and Ms Wysocki and Mrs Bower had been duly appointed. Mr Vincent had written to the University of Sunderland as requested and Mr Steve Watts, Head of Department of Culture, had been nominated. He had not been able to attend tonight's meeting due to other diary commitments, but would be able to join the Committee in March. Prof Dunning indicated that Mr Watts would be invited to a pre-meeting as part of his induction onto the Committee.

RMM

5. Stem Expressways Project Presentation

The Head of Sixth Form, Mrs Bolton, gave a presentation on the STEM Expressway Project which was funded by the Association of Colleges and was being led by Angela McLean who was not available this evening due to teaching commitments.

Mrs Bolton provided background information about the project which had been launched on 9 July with master classes and a careers fair. She reported that it aimed to engage local year 10 pupils in STEM subjects through events and enrichment activities, to engage with a variety of employers who were able to support the project and to provide a broader level 3 progression route into Science. Mrs Bolton indicated that QA Sixth Form students were involved and HND Graphics students had designed the logo. She also drew attention to key events which had taken place already or were planned to occur either after school or during the holidays in order not to encroach on lesson time.

In response to questions, Mrs Bolton confirmed that the Sixth Form had a good working relationship with both the Royal Societies of Chemistry and Physics and had been approached to offer a member of the Physics Society an opportunity to shadow a teacher in both Physics and Chemistry before they made a decision about a career change into teaching.

Committee members welcomed this fun and innovative approach to attracting young people into Science although it was noted that nowadays schools were also innovative in their delivery of Science subjects and that John Spence and Norham had very successful Science departments. Mr Downing offered Connexions' support for events in terms of providing contacts and advisors. Mrs Bolton confirmed that the College was involved in primary school settings although there were necessarily limits to this as the prime focus clearly had to be on Sixth Form teaching. Mrs Kingham also added that the College undertook work in primary schools in respect of Engineering as part of the marketing strategy.

Mr Vincent drew attention to North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) support to develop a STEM and Innovation Centre adjacent to the Coast Road campus.

In bringing this item to a close, Prof Dunning thanked Mrs Bolton on behalf of the Committee for her interesting and informative presentation.

6. Minutes and Matters Arising of the Meeting of 24 June 2014

The minutes were approved as a true record and duly signed by the Committee Chair.

All matters had been, or would be, taken forward as agreed. In particular, it was noted that the Committee Vice Chair would chair the March meeting as Prof Dunning would need to give her apologies.

7. Report from Head of Sixth Form

Mrs Bolton presented her report on the QA Sixth Form which centred on the August A level results, highlights and improvements, student destinations and enrolment for the current academic year with a breakdown by partner school. The report also covered staff development and the work of the Curriculum Development Group.

Achievement and success rate data showed another improvement in overall performance in both AS and A levels. High grade performance at individual subject level had also increased and was above the 2012/13 national averages. One HE Associate Committee member observed that the College's performance was impressive in her view. Following discussion, it was confirmed that the non-validated national averages for 2013/14 were available and there was likely to be a decline in high grade percentages and the number of students achieving at A level, suggesting that the grade boundaries had been moved. It was noted that the validated national averages for 2013/14 would be published in January 2015.

Twenty out of 24 AS level subjects showed a three-year improvement trend and where there was a decline, performance monitoring and action plans for staff were in place.

Details were provided about the success of individual A level students and their progression to university. Some 87% of QA Sixth Form students had gone straight from college to university. A request was made for analysis of the universities/institutions which QA Sixth Form students had progressed to and Mrs Bolton indicated she would circulate this information through Mrs Moore. It was noted that a significant number of AS students had progressed into employment or onto an apprenticeship or a vocational course rather than to A2 level. Ms Puliassis concurred with College management that the progression tutors did a good job in advising students about transferring to a vocational course at TyneMet rather than onto A2. Committee members were pleased to note that progression routes other than to university were also encouraged to meet the needs of the individual learner. A brief discussion followed about the value that universities would place on the future AS level which would be a standalone qualification.

DB /
RMM

The conversion rate of applications to enrolments at the QA Sixth Form was reported as some 77% overall. Details about the conversion rate and percentage of the cohort of students with the right grades from the three QA partner schools were also provided. A request was made for a breakdown related to the other schools feeding into the QA Sixth Form. It was noted that this often depended on whether or not there were good transport routes to the College from the different areas of the borough and beyond.

DB

Mrs Bolton gave details about the focus of development for staff to support the drive for outstanding teaching, learning and assessment.

Activities to enhance the students' personal and social development had expanded this term through an increased enrichment offer and the new football pitch was proving popular with both students and staff.

Sixth Form staff were currently preparing for the curriculum changes which would begin in September 2015 with the introduction of some linear A levels. This would help the College determine which awarding body to use. One important focus of the Curriculum Development Group this year was on keeping up-to-date with

changes at both GCSE and A level. The group would be looking at further details about the destinations of the pupils from the three QA partner schools and also on marketing strategies aimed at parents and year 11 pupils.

On behalf of the Committee, Prof Dunning thanked Mrs Bolton for her report, congratulating the staff and students on the August 2014 A level results in particular.

8. Any Other Business

North Tyneside Council Education Review: At Prof Dunning's request, Mr Vincent gave an update on the education review being undertaken by North Tyneside Council. Following a public consultation exercise, a report on the outcome of the consultation would be presented to the Cabinet on 10 November. The report would cover all Key Stages up to post-16 provision/school sixth forms, movement of learners across the borough, travel and transport systems, planned admission numbers and catchment areas, and plans for five new school builds. Following the Cabinet meeting next week, the Council would communicate the outcome over a four-week period. In terms of timelines, some were clearer than others. For instance, the intention was for the new builds for John Spence and Marden High Schools to be complete by September 2016. Mr Vincent indicated that pertinent information was on North Tyneside Council's website, but that he would be happy to provide the link should any member of the Committee have difficulty finding it.

2015/16 Prospectus: Mrs Kingham drew the Committee's attention to the 2015/16 prospectus for the QA Sixth Form.

9. Any items to be designated as non-confidential or no longer exempted following this meeting and conversely any items to be designated as exempted/confidential

None.

Next meeting: Tuesday, 17 March 2015, 5:30pm (to be chaired by Committee Vice Chair)

The meeting closed at 6.50 pm.