

EXTERNAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW FOR NEWHAM COLLEGE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Board of the Newham College appointed Ian Ashman to undertake an External Governance Review (EGR) in the spring of 2024. The Department for Education (DfE) now recommend these are undertaken every three years. The scope of the Review was to identify strengths and areas for development, in order to improve Board ability and effectiveness, and to help achieve the Board's aim of providing excellent governance in an outstanding College.
- 1.2 The Reviewer assessed governance against a range of criteria drawn from external guidance. These sources included Department for Education, Ofsted and the latest Association of Colleges Code of Good Governance, which is the benchmark for good practice. Evidence has been drawn from interviews with governors, the executive team, observations of Board and Committee meetings, a survey of governors, document review and meetings with staff and students.

2. Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggested Enhancements

- 2.1 The Reviewer has documented strengths, areas for development and conclusions, based on the evidence. The headline conclusion of the EGR is that the governance of Newham College is good, with a proven track record of success and a strong capacity to make further progress towards having excellent governance.
- 2.2 Many strengths that have been identified through the process, including a very good working partnership between governors and the Executive, strong support and challenge, holding leaders to account, strong direction for the College, and governors bring a very strong range of skills, and a wide range of experience. There are good systems and processes in place including effective Committees and Board meetings.
- 2.3 The Reviewer has made a number of recommendations and suggested good practice, to address the areas for development identified, to help the Board achieve its aim of moving from good to excellent governance. These include:
- Developing a new strategic plan, including an update the educational character of the college, to make the most of the opportunities to better serve local communities and employers, through merger, and carry forward the strong collaborative culture and high expectations for students, staff and managers.
 - Further develop the governor link scheme to create an even stronger evidence base and understanding of how the college works in practice and seek additional evidence of employer and other external stakeholder satisfaction with College provision; to help assess and drive further improvement in student success and responsiveness to employers and communities
 - Enhance Governor development and induction, increase gender diversity of governors and increase the frequency of Board self-assessment, to become annual from 2025.
- 2.4 The Board at Newham College has a proven track record in helping drive improvements in performance in recent years, having achieved a sustainable financial position, secured a 'Good' grade in inspection. The Board is determined to achieve further improvement towards excellence and is ready to apply the same focus and rigour and effective partnership with the Executive Team, which has proved so effective in the progress of the College to date.
- 2.5 It is hoped that the observations and recommendations in this report will assist the Board in securing the further development of the College towards its goal of achieving excellence.

Ian Ashman (External Governance Reviewer)

10 July 2024