

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LEICESTER COLLEGE CORPORATION:



MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM STRATEGY AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 MARCH 2018

Present:	John Allen (Chair) Verity Hancock Laura Hadland	Mohammed Tokaria Mandeep Singh Claire Willis
In Attendance:	Stewart Foster Louise Hazel Tracey Kinsley Karen Plowman Kully Sandhu Marco Salotti Tina Thorpe	Director of Quality Improvement Director of Governance and Policy Vice Principal EE and Commercial Head of Quality Development (items 1-6) Vice Principal 14-19 Adult and HE Manager for HE (items 1-4) Vice Principal

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Danielle Gillett, Alison Honour and Nameera Khan.

2.2 Ruth Ingman was absent.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1 **The Minutes of the meeting on 18 January 2018 were agreed as an accurate record and approved.**

3.2 As a matter arising, the Director of Governance and Policy reported that disciplinary letters explained the process to students including that the panel would meet and make a decision in their absence.

3.3 The Principal then reported that following interviews, no appointment had been made to the Director of Quality Improvement post. The post would be re-advertised; in the interim Claire Willis would take on the role in addition to her position as Director of Marketing and Communications.

4 HE UPDATE

- 4.1 The HE Manager presented the HE Update report. The following points were highlighted:
- 4.1.1 Recruitment and income for 2017/18 was in line with targets; additional activity had been commissioned through a partnership with two centres delivering HND Business.
 - 4.1.2 The capital investment in the HE hub at St Margaret's had been well received.
 - 4.1.3 2016/17 had seen lower than expected pass and achievement rates. Retention was currently at 97% but was likely to decline. The current year's achievement target was 80% and projections showed the College was likely to achieve and possibly exceed this target.
 - 4.1.4 Attendance was currently slightly below the agreed benchmark of 85%; this was being discussed at Programme Management Boards. Students were keen that the College tackled poor attendance as it impacted on the whole cohort's experience.
 - 4.1.5 There were several changes to the HE landscape which would impact on the College including reviews of Level 4 and 5 provision; the wider post-18 funding review; the launch of the Office for Students; the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) for subjects; and the changing regulatory regime for HE.
 - 4.1.6 The HE teaching, learning enhancement programme was planned to extend the drivers for improvement which had been successful in securing the Ofsted Good rating to HE provision.
- 4.2 Governors asked a number of **questions** including:
- 4.2.1 **What universities' approaches were to tackling attendance and whether there was a correlation between poor attendance and achievement.** Universities tended not to tackle poor attendance until it fell below 50%. There was a correlation between attendance and achievement, and the College focused on attendance because of the nature of the students and the challenges they faced including in attending.
 - 4.2.2 **Whether the subject level TEF would apply.** It might, although the College's provision might be too small.
 - 4.2.3 **How quality in the subcontractors was ensured.** The College's own quality regime was applied to this provision.
 - 4.2.4 **Whether new courses or additional recruitment on existing courses was the way forward.** It would be a combination of both.
 - 4.2.5 **Whether the relationship with DMU would continue or whether it might pull out of future validation.** This was unknown; the College was the single largest provider of Level 3 students and an important pipeline into DMU. The relationship was due for review in 2019 but at the moment, the university appeared keen to proceed on the basis of collaboration.
- 4.3 **Governors noted the report including the intention to devise and implement an HE teaching learning and enhancement programme.**

5 INSPECTION UPDATE: HEADLINES FROM IMPROVEMENT PLANS

- 5.1 The Principal presented a report on headlines from the College improvement plans. The following points were highlighted.
- 5.1.1 All areas had detailed plans which led to the overall College Improvement Plan; this would reported on at the end of the year.
 - 5.1.2 All plans included actions to improve achievement rates for underperforming courses; attendance and retention; diversity gaps; the quality of teaching and learning; and student and employer survey data.
 - 5.1.3 National achievement rates were due on 22 March and this information would be provided at the next meeting.
 - 5.1.4 The plans were monitored by the VPs and through QA meetings; the governor QA meetings also provided an opportunity for governors to monitor progress.
- 5.2 Governors **asked** whether the example given was a good one and how other areas' plans would differ. They would follow a similar format but might contain less detail.
- 5.3 **Governors noted the report and the example improvement plan.**

6 TEACHING AND LEARNING

- 6.1 The Director of Quality Improvement gave an update on the development of the Curriculum Scorecard and gave a demonstration of the Scorecard.
- 6.2 Governors **asked** a number of questions including:
- 6.2.1 **How the decisions about the thresholds for 1-4 ratings were made.** These took into account national benchmarks such as those used by Ofsted, for example 3% above national would get the highest score.
 - 6.2.2 **How staff were encouraged to do what was expected of them.** The scoring system helped with this; staff did not like having lower scores and this nudged them to take action. It also enabled managers to focus on those staff more in need of support and was already having a big impact for example on unmarked registers.
 - 6.2.3 **Whether the Scorecard was used in appraisal.** Yes, it had already been used in 2016/17.
 - 6.2.4 **What managers' feedback had been.** Feedback had been very positive; they had found it useful in triangulating information and identifying support needs. It also allowed staff to see their own data.
 - 6.2.5 **Whether Ofsted had seen the Scorecard.** They had and had made positive comments on it. It was based on a system used by Derby College which had been found to be helpful in securing an improvement for that college from Requires Improvement to Good.
- 6.3 **Governors noted progress on the development of the Scorecard.**
- 6.4 The Head of Quality Development gave feedback from the Quality Assurance (QA) meetings. The following points were highlighted.

- 6.4.1 QA meetings had continued to take place throughout the year and had been shown to have impact. This included improved attendance; increased use of Moodle; a decrease in the number of unmarked registers; and generally accurate predicted outcomes. The positive impacts had been noted in the inspection report.
 - 6.4.2 The next cycle would be looking at safeguarding and prevent.
 - 6.4.3 Lateness and punctuality was a focus; this had been picked up during the inspection. It was felt this might be under-reported and the College was looking at ways to encourage reporting including through plug-ins for staff.
- 6.5 Governors **asked** a number of questions including:
- 6.5.1 **What constituted lateness.** Arrival after the class had started.
 - 6.5.2 **Whether students could pick up lessons on Moodle if they were late or absent.** Yes, this was encouraged and Moodle usage was being monitored through the Scorecard and was increasing.
 - 6.5.3 **Whether governors' safeguarding training was due for renewal.** This was tracked and governors would be reminded at an appropriate time.
- 6.6 **Governors noted the paper.**

7 16-18 PERFORMANCE TABLES

- 7.1 The Director of Quality Improvement presented a report on 16-18 performance tables. Key points highlighted included:
- 7.1.1 The five headline measures were explained and included: progress, attainment, progress in English and maths, retention and destinations.
 - 7.1.2 The qualification types included in the tables were A levels, Applied Generals, tech levels, English and maths, Technical Certificates and Level 2 vocational qualifications.
 - 7.1.3 Students' prior attainment was lower than national and so it was felt that attainment data was not the most helpful indicator of success.
 - 7.1.4 The value added score showed a significant improvement.
- 7.2 Governors asked a number of **questions** including:
- 7.2.1 **How well the measures were understood by staff.** Work had been done to explain the measures to staff and help them understand the implications for students and the College.
 - 7.2.2 **Whether there was a reluctance to award distinctions among some staff.** The importance of higher grades had been explained to staff; the external verification process would also avoid this happening.
 - 7.2.3 **How the College could get into the top 25% of colleges.** Overall higher grades were needed. However there was turbulence in terms of grade boundaries and so this would remain challenging.
- 7.3 **Governors noted the paper.**

8 PROGRESSION AND DESTINATION DATA

- 8.1 The Director of Marketing and Communications presented an update on the destination survey conducted by Think Alumni. The following key points were highlighted:
- 8.1.1 The focus had been on increasing the number of responses; 870 successful calls had been made, an increase on the previous year.
 - 8.1.2 The data would be analysed by Curriculum and Programme Area. This would enable an analysis of whether students had progressed to destinations in sectors related to their area of study.
 - 8.1.3 The College's destinations data and gaps in the current data collection would be looked at in more detail by the Director of Marketing and Communications.
 - 8.1.4 A more detailed report on the survey results would be brought to the next meeting.
- 8.2 In response to **questions** it was confirmed that the response rate and outcomes compared well to other colleges.
- 8.3 **Governors noted the report and the intention to provide a full report at the next meeting.**
- 8.4 The Vice Principal then gave an update on Internal Progression. The following key points were highlighted:
- 8.4.1 The analysis showed that there was a 2% decline in the number of students returning to study at Leicester College; there were variations by age and level.
 - 8.4.2 The 2016 inspection had picked up that there appeared to be high numbers of students returning to study at the same level. Over the past two years, this figure had declined. Instances of students returning at the same or lower level had been analysed in detail. In all circumstances, there were good reasons for this.
 - 8.4.3 Entry level data included those studying at different levels within Entry although this could not be disaggregated.
 - 8.4.4 The data was proving helpful for planning for 2018/19.
 - 8.4.5 In response to **questions** it was confirmed that the slight dip in returning students was disappointing but was in part a reflection of what had happened to adult numbers.
 - 8.4.6 The way the curriculum was structured particularly at Level 3 and the move to loans was impacting on internal progression. High employment rates were also affecting students' willingness to progress beyond the level necessary to secure jobs, which was often Level 2.
- 8.5 **Governors noted the report and requested a comparator report based on Mides data.**

9 PROGRESS DATA

- 9.1 The Vice Principals gave a presentation on progress data for Study

Programmes. The following points were highlighted:

- 9.1.1 ALPS was used for graded qualifications but the College needed to report on all qualifications. Guidance had been issued to staff for standardising the measure of progress for all qualifications.
 - 9.1.2 The learner journey was explained and demonstrated to governors including how targets were set, moderated and how progress against targets and each assessment was tracked in year.
 - 9.1.3 Progress review meetings would result in risk ratings for students based on attendance, behaviour, progress and effort; this would be recorded on ProMonitor.
 - 9.1.4 The systems were now used by all curriculum areas. Whole College reports on student progress would be available in 2018/19.
- 9.2 Governors asked a number of **questions** including:
- 9.2.1 **Whether students would know their target grades.** They would; the grades were on their ILPs which they could see on ProPortal.
 - 9.2.2 **Whether target grades would change in year.** They might following the outcomes of student assessments and progress review meetings.
- 9.3 **Governors noted the information presented.**
- 9.4 The Vice Principal Employer Engagement presented a report of progress data for Apprenticeships. The following points were highlighted:
- 9.4.1 The use of Smart Assessor was explained. It included similar inputs and monitoring processes to those used for Study Programmes. There had been a big focus on use of reviews over the year and all staff were now using reviews.
 - 9.4.2 More work was needed on tracking progress against apprentices' qualifications. This was being paused because of restructuring currently underway. The priority for the next term would be on reviews, ILPs and group profiles.
 - 9.4.3 The aim would be to move away from manual trackers and use Smart Assessors for all tracking in the next academic year.
 - 9.4.4 Further reports would be brought back to governors on timely achievement.
- 9.5 Governors **asked** how long the College had been using Smart Assessor and how reliable it was. It had been in use for three years; reliability was an issue but this was followed up promptly with the account manager.
- 9.6 **Governors noted the paper.**

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 Wednesday 20 June 2018.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 The Principal reported that there had been a number of staffing difficulties in

English and maths; this included difficulties in recruiting and some sickness issues. Half of the GCSE students had had three teachers during the year. There were also staffing difficulties in Sport resulting from performance issues, sickness and the College's ability to recruit good staff. These issues had resulted in some complaints and might impact on achievement.

11.2 The Chair then reported that this was Stewart Foster's last meeting before his retirement. The Committee thanked Stewart for his dedication and enthusiasm and wished him well.