



AGENDA
REFERENCE

A

CORPORATION/COMMITTEE PAPER

**Curriculum Strategy and Quality Improvement Committee
27 January 2021**

<i>TITLE</i>	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 November 2020
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<i>PURPOSE</i>	To receive, agree and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 November 2020
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<i>RECOMMENDATION</i>	Governors are recommended to note the minutes and agree their accuracy
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<i>No. of pages in main paper</i>	8
<i>Appendices/Annexes</i>	None
<i>Financial Implications</i>	None
<i>Risk Implications</i>	Failure to follow agreed and proper practices
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LEICESTER COLLEGE CORPORATION:

MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM STRATEGY AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2020



Present:	John Allen (Chair) Lisa Armitage Shaun Curtis Kathy Foster Danielle Gillett	Verity Hancock Denise Newsome Louisa Poole Trisha Spencer
In Attendance:	Louise Hazel Kully Sandhu Tina Thorpe Claire Willis Angela Tchetchnev	Director of Governance and Policy Vice Principal Adult and HE Vice Principal Study Programmes and Apprenticeships Director of Quality Improvement Director of English Maths and Supported Learning (item 6)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2.1 There were no apologies for absence. New student and staff governors were welcomed to their first meeting. The Chair noted that this would be Denise Newsome's last meeting and thanked her for her contribution to the Committee.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting on 17 June 2020 were **agreed** as an accurate record and **approved**.
- 3.2 Actions and matters arising would be covered by items on the agenda.

4 QA MEETINGS: SUMMARY OF ISSUES FROM 2019/20

- 4.1 The Director of Quality Improvement presented a report on the issues arising from the 2019/20 QA meetings. The following points were highlighted.
- 4.1.1 There had only been two terms of QA meetings because of the lockdown but 60 individual meetings had taken place. The final series of planned meetings in the summer term had been replaced by the calculated grades boards which had reviewed all students' grades.
- 4.1.2 There had been two progress points during the year.

- 4.1.3 Attendance had been showing below 2018/19 figures although retention was much higher than the previous year.
- 4.1.4 Professional viewings had continued with 755 viewings conducted. Improvements had been seen throughout the year with 88.5% of sessions effective; this was a strong profile.
- 4.1.5 Support and development had been provided by the Quality team and positive feedback had been received on this.

4.2 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**

- 4.2.1 **Were viewings effectively 'observations'?** They were.
- 4.2.2 **Whether the assessment of a safe environment during viewings would have a higher profile from now on?** It had always been a factor assessed during viewings but it was likely to be even more important.
- 4.2.3 **Whether the viewings were graded.** They were not. A series of viewings would be undertaken in March. The current term's focus was on providing support and development to staff in using different delivery methods.
- 4.2.4 **Whether the data on viewings could provide a good baseline for this year?** If it had been a normal year, further improvement would have been expected by the end of the year. However, it did provide a reasonable baseline. Virtual learning walks were also being undertaken and were seeing good practice. The enforced move to more online learning had improved staff digital skills. People had also been keen to take up support from the Curriculum Development Coaches which was a positive change in culture.
- 4.2.5 **Would governors be able to undertake virtual learning walks.** They would, these were being organised.

4.3 **Governors noted the report.**

5 **COVID-19: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The Principal gave an update on the main implications of COVID-19 for teaching, learning and assessment. The following points were highlighted:
 - 5.1.1 GCSE English and maths resits had just been completed. There were hundreds more students resitting than would normally be the case because of the Government's promise that students could resit exams for free. The College had hardly any time and minimal input with these students so there were concerns about achievement rates. Attendance at the exams had been 93% for English and 84% for maths although a significant number of students were self-isolating.
 - 5.1.2 It was still unclear what the approach to exams would be for 2021; dates and results had been moved back by three weeks which would impact on enrolment for September 2021.
 - 5.1.3 The Institute was currently looking at EPAs and some apprentices might have the EPAs removed. For vocational qualifications, Pearson and City and Guilds were looking at some adaptations to internal and external assessment and submissions during the year. Requirements

around work experience had been relaxed.

5.1.4 The College worked with 25 awarding organisations and each had a different approach. It was likely there would be additional costs for the College from increased invigilation and renting of other venues.

5.1.5 The College has responded well to the changes for 2019/20. The CAG process had been rigorous and there had been no serious challenges to grades or appeals from students.

5.2 **Governors asked whether staff were undertaking more assessments of students, in case they were needed if exams were cancelled again.** They were; there were several assessments points during the year. The College was also looking at how it could run invigilated mock exams.

5.3 The Vice Principal presented a report on the catch-up tuition funding available. The following points were highlighted:

5.3.1 The DfE had identified additional funding of £96 million for a one-off fund for 2020/21 to support those students who had been particularly adversely affected by the pandemic. The funding was to support small group tuition for 16 to 19 students on study programmes or with an EHCP where learning has been disrupted and who did not have at least a grade 5 in English or maths.

5.3.2 The funding should be used to support the tuition activity beyond the programmes of education already planned for 2020/21.

5.3.3 Providers could decide on what would be most effective approach, considering students' needs and local circumstances but the ESFA expected that groups would not exceed five students.

5.3.4 The College could use up to £649,215. It would need to monitor and report on activity.

5.4 **Student governors commented that this fund would be beneficial to students and support in small groups would be particularly helpful.**

5.5 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**

5.5.1 **Whether there were challenges in resourcing the small groups.**

Staff utilisation was being looked at. The College would need to use vocational staff to support learning on main programmes but additional staff could be brought in if needed.

5.5.2 **Given the gap in achievement between ages and some groups, could this be used to address that?** The rules were prescriptive about how and for whom it could be used but it should enable students from all ethnic groups to be supported. The College would also try and put in place separate support for older students where they needed it.

5.5.3 **Would using the funding be affected by another lockdown?** The funding would still be used and the sessions would be designed so that they could be delivered face to face or online.

5.5.4 **Lots of students still did not have the technology they needed to participate; what could be done to support them?** Provision was being put in place. The College had ordered a significant number of additional laptops; 300 had already been issued. Every student with an EHCP had been offered a laptop and a further 500 were being prepared

for students.

5.5.5 **How much additional work could be funded using the £650k and who would deliver it.** It would be a mix of existing staff and additional resources. There would not be enough funding to support every student and so the progress points would be used to assess those most at risk of not achieving and those students would be prioritised for support.

5.5.6 **Whether the funding would be spent.** It would.

5.6 **Governors endorsed the approach to apply for and use catch up tuition funding.**

5.7 The Principal presented a report on contingency plans in the event that the College had to close and move to online/remote learning only. The following points were highlighted.

5.7.1 Every area had produced a contingency plan; these were particularly important for curriculum areas. Example plans were provided.

5.7.2 The approach would be slightly different across different areas of the College depending upon the type of provision and levels of qualification studied.

5.7.3 The plans had been written before the latest lockdown and so some elements of the plans were already being invoked.

5.8 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**

5.8.1 **During the first lockdown, the College's support for students had been excellent. Was there any chance that some practical assessments could be brought forward in case there were any further closure?** It would depend on where in the syllabus students were; in some cases, the need to cover underpinning knowledge first meant this would not be possible. Curriculum Areas were looking at the sequencing of delivery so some areas such as sport had front loaded practical sessions. Others had issued assignments early so students could start working on them now. In some areas it would be difficult to bring forward assessments but across the College teaching was being layered to enable it where possible. Also, awarding bodies set some of the exam and assessment dates and so these could not be brought forward. Students would be continually assessed by their tutors at points throughout the year for practical and theory.

5.8.2 **Some students needed internet access as well as laptops; was there any Government or other support for this?** There was no Government support. The College was looking at whether it could afford to provide some students with wifi access. It was not possible to guarantee that everyone would be provided with all the kit needed. For adult students, in some cases there was a need to address students' digital skills first. ESOL had experimented with a switch to online learning (via smartphones) and this had gone well.

5.8.3 Where students did not have the necessary technology, workbooks were being provided. For community courses, moving to online was more difficult.

- 5.9 **Governors noted the report on the implications for teaching, learning and assessment.**

6 CURRICULUM AREA FOCUS

- 6.1 The Director of Maths and English Cross-College (MECC) gave a presentation on the work of the Curriculum Area. The following points were highlighted.
- 6.1.1 The area's offer across different sites was explained. It covered maths and English for study programme and apprenticeships.
 - 6.1.2 The majority of the 3,357 students were 16-19 Study Programme students at 82% of provision (2,747 students); 11% (360 students) were apprentices.
 - 6.1.3 Achievement rates had seen a slight overall increase. Grades 9-1 were slightly higher than in previous years because there had not been an issue with attendance at exams. All areas had improved except Functional Skills maths which was down 12%. A drop had been expected because of the introduction of new qualifications earlier in the year. Pearson had confirmed that there had been a national decrease but the College's pass rates appeared to be slightly higher than the national.
 - 6.1.4 The area was involved in several national projects including the Centre for Excellence in Maths for which the College received £200k a year for three years; the NCOP scheme; and a new ETF focusing on flipped learning in GCSE English.
 - 6.1.5 Priorities for 2020/21 were to improve achievement rates in FSM and FSE; maintain achievement rates in GCSE English and maths; staff training and development to prepare for and support online delivery; and maintain student engagement in virtual classrooms.
- 6.2 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**
- 6.2.1 **The Committee had taken a keen interest in English and maths and was pleased to see the significant improvements that had been achieved. It would be important to be vigilant and keep monitoring progress.** Acknowledged. There might well be a drop in achievement as a result of some new students' English and maths grades being inflated during the CAG process. This might mean it they found it harder for them to achieve a grade 4 but it was likely this would reflect a national picture.
 - 6.2.2 **Could students be required to attend their English and maths sessions; the tutor was really good but some students chose not to attend.** It was a requirement for study programmes and all non-attendance would be followed up but self-directed study sessions were up to the student to attend.
 - 6.2.3 **How were numbers looking for apprentices taking English and maths?** There were not as many as in previous years but it was hoped this would pick up as enrolments increased.
- 6.3 The Director of English Maths and Supported Learning (EMSL) gave a presentation on the work of the Curriculum Area. The following points were highlighted.

- 6.3.1 The area's offer across different sites was explained; 51% of provision was at APC.
- 6.3.2 The majority of the 1,599 students were adults (AEB) at 84% of provision; 57% of the £2m income was attached to these students. Recruitment to adult skills for life courses had been particularly affected by the lockdown in the third term when recruitment should have continued.
- 6.3.3 Achievement rates for 2019/20 had been not as high as would have been liked at 83.3% for adults. 16-19 achievement was 92.5%.
- 6.3.4 Curriculum developments for the area included GCSE English Literature; Access to Medicine; a two-year GCSE maths and English programme; essential digital skills; new SEND provision; and supported internships.
- 6.3.5 Priorities for 2020/21 were the same as for MECC with additional priorities to develop new recruitment model for students with learning disabilities; ensure students could work remotely and online; an ambition to bring all of Supported Learning on one site; and online assessment and enrolment models.

6.4 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**

- 6.4.1 **Which university Access to Medicine was being developed with.** The University of Leicester. It would still be difficult for students to get direct entry.
- 6.4.2 **Would there be particular issues for adult achievement?** There were some concerns around the new functional skills specifications which would be harder for some adults. There was a lot of remote and blended delivery and the issue would be making sure students attended, were learning and making progress. Work was ongoing to maintain evidence of delivery and achievement throughout the year.

6.5 **Governors thanked the Directors for their helpful presentations.**

7 **ACHIEVEMENT RATES 2019/20**

- 7.1 The Director of Quality Improvement presented a paper setting out a three-year trend comparison of the College's achievement rates of Qualification Achievement Rates (QARs) compared to the National Achievement Rates (NARs). The following points were highlighted.
 - 7.1.1 Due to cancellation of the 2019/20 exams and significant change in grading methodology the QARs, NARs and Performance Tables would not be published for 2019/20. Comparisons would be made with 2018/19 data but this would not always provide a reliable comparison.
 - 7.1.2 From 2018/19, the College Apprenticeship overall QARs included apprentices on Standards as well as Frameworks. Timely QARs and ProAchieve data only included Frameworks.
 - 7.1.3 Ofsted would want to see improving trends. The College's E&T 2019/20 overall achievement rate showed a slight decline on 2018/19 but was still 0.1% above the NAR. Adult achievement showed a slight decline, 0.4%, above the NAR by 0.8%. However, the drop in adult recruitment

had depressed the College's overall achievement figure.

- 7.1.4 Some students were unable to complete their assessments in 2019/20 which also impacted on achievement and short courses which started just before lockdown but could not complete were treated as withdrawals.
- 7.1.5 16-18 achievement saw improvement for a second year by 0.2% to 78.3%, which was 5.1% below the NAR. Level 2 and 3 both saw improvements. The College could be confident in these results because of the rigour of the CAG process.
- 7.1.6 16-18-year-old achievement rates were above the national achievement rates in five of the six main qualification types and improved in five of the six main qualification types.
- 7.1.7 Adult achievement rates were above the national achievement rates in four of the nine main qualification types. Achievement had declined in five of the nine main qualification types.
- 7.1.8 Achievement by diversity indicators did not show any areas of concern. Adult achievement was significantly higher than 16-18 by 12.4% but the delivery model and qualifications delivered were very different from 16-18 programmes. For age, ethnicity and disability, the achievement rate gap was low and not greater than 5%.
- 7.1.9 Apprenticeship timely remained a concern for 24+ although the numbers were very small.
- 7.1.10 There were 142 continuers who could not complete their EPAs or were furloughed.

7.2 Governors asked a number of **questions** including:

- 7.2.1 **Whether it was possible to compare with other colleges' data.** The Mides data was collected from 220 colleges and so would provide some comparison. This would be brought to the next meeting. Work would also be done to combine the achievements of continuing students to give an indication of how the College would have performed had it not been for the pandemic.
- 7.2.2 **What impact the furloughed apprentices would have.** Each was being carefully tracked and they should achieve. It was noted that the second lockdown would impact and more redundancies were expected. However, achievement rates for those who had passed their EPAs was high at 90%.
- 7.2.3 **Why there appeared to be such a drop among lower level courses.** This was largely due to the 300 motor vehicle students who had not been able to complete their assessments because of the Leicester lockdown; the majority of these were at entry and Level 1.
- 7.2.4 **Would a SAR be produced?** It would and would be brought to the next meeting.
- 7.2.5 **What grade would it give the College based on the achievement date?** Under the EIF, the assessment and grading was about more than achievement and would look at progression and destinations and the whole student experience.

7.3 Governors noted the report in particular:

- 7.3.1 **Improving 16-18 and timely apprenticeship performance**
- 7.3.2 **The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on achievement**

7.3.3 The absence of published data for 2019/20.

8 KPI MONITORING

8.1 The Director of Quality Improvement gave an update on KPIs. The following points were highlighted.

- 8.1.1 The first progress point would be 23-27 November. Tutors would look at students' starting points and their working at grades.
- 8.1.2 Retention was high at 99.5% compared to 99.2% in the previous year.
- 8.1.3 Attendance was showing as 83.9% compared to 91% last year but this did not reflect the issues experienced this year with students self-isolating, a mix of online and on site delivery and directed study, as well as schools closing which was impacting on students who were parents. This would be looked at in more detail during QA meetings.

8.2 **Governors noted the update on KPIs.**

9 COMMITTEE SELF ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

9.1 The Director of Governance and Policy presented the results of the committee self-assessment survey. The following points were highlighted.

- 9.1.1 The results of the survey were very positive.
- 9.1.2 Areas for development included regular updates from department and direct scrutiny/questioning of Directors; deep dives into specific areas e.g. English and Maths; more discussion of the Education Inspection Framework and its implications including personal development and online delivery; student engagement; 16-8 improvement and scrutiny of areas that appear to be static; and exploring how the monitoring and evaluation resulted in improvements.
- 9.1.3 These would be incorporated into the workplan for the Committee.

Governors noted the results of the self-assessment survey.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 27 January 2021

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 There was no other business.