

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

MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM STRATEGY AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2022



Present:	Anne Frost (Chair) Zoe Allman Lisa Armitage	Sam Emery Verity Hancock Maureen Magutu
In Attendance:	Louise Hazel Debi Donnarumma Kully Sandhu Claire Willis Angela Tchetchnev	Director of Governance and Policy Vice Principal Study Programmes and Apprenticeships Vice Principal Adult and HE Director of Quality Improvement Director of English Maths and Supported Learning (item 4)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 1.1 Anne Frost identified a potential new interest in two local providers. There were no other declarations of interest.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2.1 Anne Frost explained that John Allen had resigned as a governor and so she would be taking over as Chair of the Committee for the time being. Apologies were received from Danielle Gillett, Jai Sharda and Shaun Curtis. Sam Emery was welcomed to the meeting.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 **The minutes of the meeting on 22 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and approved.**
- 3.2 As a matter arising, the Director of Quality Improvement gave an update on deep dives. The following points were highlighted:
- 3.2.1 Three had taken place this term, one of which involved an external consultant.
 - 3.2.2 There were some common themes. Students felt safe, demonstrated confidence and could articulate well, were well behaved and wearing ID. In terms of themes around staff, there was a lack of correlation between performance improvement plans, viewing and work scrutiny outcomes and appraisals, as well as some inconsistency in the recording of personal learning activities.

- 3.2.3 Strengths included good example of effective teaching and learning, expert knowledge among staff, clear boundaries and students being respectful of each other and teachers. Safeguarding was effective. Facilities were well equipped.
- 3.2.4 Areas for improvement included in the sequencing of delivery, planning for learning, stretch and challenge and in the consistency of initial assessments from a vocational perspective. Themes and areas of good practice were being shared across the College.

4 CURRICULUM AREA FOCUS

- 4.1 The Director of English Maths and Supported Learning (EMSL) gave a presentation on the work of the curriculum area. The following points were highlighted.
 - 4.1.1 The area covered provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including provision for students with sensory needs, adult basic skills English and maths, Access to HE and a unique adult GCSE pathway. Provision was located at the two main sites and the City Skills Centre.
 - 4.1.2 There were small numbers of 16-18s and the majority of the area's students were adults studying part time. 71% of the offer was funded through the Adult Education Budget.
 - 4.1.3 Retention was lower than other curriculum areas and this impacted on overall achievement; pass rates were better but the part-time nature of the provision, the legacy of the pandemic and the pressures on students to choose work over study had impacted on retention.
 - 4.1.4 A deep dive had been conducted with support from an external consultant. This had highlighted areas for improvement which were included in the area's SAR and QIP.
 - 4.1.5 Student survey results were very positive.
 - 4.1.6 Developments and opportunities included a new management team, a refresh of the curriculum with some new certificated courses designed to help improve students' employment chance, a new distance learning offer and the return to work in the community which had been curtailed during the pandemic.
 - 4.1.7 Discussions were ongoing with the local authority which took the view that the College was a more appropriate setting for students with EHCPs at age 16. There was therefore an opportunity to increase the number of in College at an earlier age.
- 4.2 In response to a **question** as to whether student surveys were emailed, it was explained that most surveys were done electronically through links in Moodle or on Teams. Paper surveys were issued in a few areas where necessary.
- 4.3 The Director of Re-Engagement, English and Maths (REEM) gave a presentation on the work of the curriculum area. The following points were highlighted.
 - 4.3.1 The area which had been formed this year following a re-organisation included English and maths cross-College, distance learning community learning and Launchpad.

- 4.3.2 35% of the College's 16-18-year olds came without English or maths GCSEs and only 42% came with both. This meant that the College had a high number of young people taking these qualifications in addition to their main vocational programme. The College performed well above national averages for GCSE pass rates in English and maths. The College had led a successful Centre for Excellence in maths.
- 4.3.3 Enrolments by subject were outlined. It was planned to move more students onto GCSE programmes rather than functional skills as these offered more opportunity for students to achieve a qualification. This might impact on the College's 9-4 grades but it was felt to be the right approach for some students.
- 4.3.4 The distance learning offer was described. This had lower achievement in 2021/22 but this was due to both the pandemic and some process issues which had now been addressed.
- 4.3.5 Community learning which was focussed on developing skills, confidence and motivation through 9-week courses had high retention and pass rates.
- 4.3.6 Launch Pad was designed for students who would otherwise be NEET with a focus on English and maths and pastoral support and a curriculum tailored to the individuals.
- 4.3.7 Curriculum developments for each of the areas were outlined.

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

- 4.4.1 **If distance learning students were struggling, how were they supported?** There were two trainer assessors who could provide tutorial support. Feedback was also provided through assessment and marking.
- 4.4.2 **How did students get referred to Launch Pad?** They might have applied for other courses but did not have the grades. There were some referrals in year. There were also some home educated students who attended for part of the week.
- 4.4.3 **Moving some students from functional skills to GCSEs seemed counter intuitive. What was the rationale for this?** It was important to look at students' intended destinations and for some, GCSEs were the best route, particularly if they intended to progress to HE. Some colleges had abandoned functional skills entirely but they would still be the right qualifications for some students so a functional skills offer would be retained.

4.5 **Governors thanked the Directors for their presentations and noted the information.**

5 **ACHIEVEMENT RATES**

- 5.1 The Director of Quality Improvement presented a report on achievement rates for 2021/22. The following points were highlighted:
 - 5.1.1 2018/19 was used as the benchmark as the last set of nationally published rates for education and training.
 - 5.1.2 The College's education and training (E&T) overall achievement rate showed a 0.4% decline on 2020/21 to 85.5%, 1.2% below the 2018/19

- NAR. This was a three-year declining trend.
- 5.1.3 16-18 overall achievement had declined by 0.3% to 76.6%, which was 6.8% below the 2018/19 NAR.
 - 5.1.4 Adult achievement had declined by 2.0% to 88.9% which was 1.0% below the 2018/19 NAR.
 - 5.1.5 The GCSE English 9-4 pass rate for adults improved by 11.4% whereas the 16-18-year-old pass rate declined by 9.5%. Both were above the 2018/19 national pass rate, adults by 23.3% and 16-18 by 4.8%. GCSE maths 16-18 and adults had both declined by 22.5% and 6.5% respectively but both were significantly above the 2018/19 national pass rate, 16-18 by 17.4% and adult by 22.1%. Functional Skills 16-18 and adult achievement rates both improved by 8.4% and 2.2% respectively.
 - 5.1.6 Achievement rates by diversity indicators for E&T did not show any areas of concern.
 - 5.1.7 Overall apprenticeship achievement rate standards and frameworks had increased by 2.0% to 58.1%, which was 0.4% above the 2020/21 NAR. There were some gaps by diversity indicators.
- 5.2 The Principal further explained that 12 out of 21 sector areas had improved their 16-18 success rates. The College would need to make some decisions about whether some of the poorest performing courses should be continued, notably uniform public services and accountancy. The lower rates were not felt to be due to poor teaching but a combination of other factors including the legacy of the pandemic, IAG, the English and maths condition of funding and the fact that summative assessments did not suit many of the College's students. Nevertheless, better tracking and monitoring was needed.
- 5.3 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**
- 5.3.1 **Were all students aware of the support that was available to them?** This needed to be communicated better to students. The College was inclusive and did not want to turn students away. A lot of support was available.
 - 5.3.2 **There were clearly some areas that needed focusing on; how would these be monitored by the Committee?** The main areas for improvement would be brought back to the Committee along with explanations and planned action for those worst performing areas.
- 5.4 **Governors noted the information and requested updates on the worst performing areas.**

6 DRAFT SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR)

- 6.1 The Director of Quality Improvement presented the draft Self-Assessment Report (SAR). The following points were highlighted:
- 6.1.1 The SAR identified the main strengths and areas for improvement for the College. The College was self-assessing as Good in all areas.
- 6.2 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**
- 6.2.1 **What was the purpose of the SAR and what was the Committee**

being asked to do? The SAR was for the College's use but would also be looked at by Ofsted. The Committee was asked to comment on the draft. Corporation would be asked to sign off the SAR and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) in December.

6.2.2 **It was well written and the evidence reflected the grades.** Noted.

6.2.3 **It would be helpful to get Jai Sharda's comments.** He would be contacted and asked for comments.

6.2.4 **Under Behaviour and Attitudes, did 'in most areas' mean that there were areas where there was not a calm and orderly environment?**

This would be amended to better reflect that behaviour was good across all areas of the College.

6.2.5 **The 16-18 achievement rates were a cause for concern but the SAR rated programmes for young people as Good; how did these two reconcile?** Education programmes for young people covered more than just achievement. Progression and destinations, distance travelled and the whole educational experience were considered and were considered good.

6.3 **Governors noted the draft SAR.**

7 T LEVEL UPDATE

7.1 The Vice Principal gave an update on T Level implementation. The following points were highlighted:

7.1.1 The College was now in the second year of T level delivery. It was one of the largest providers of T levels in the country.

7.1.2 A strategic group was regularly reviewing the progress of students and good practice. On the basis of recruitment to date, some changes had been made to the implementation plan.

7.1.3 The awarding body for Healthcare and Science T Levels, NCFE, was currently under review following poor year 1 outcomes. This had impacted on the national reputation of the T Level brand and enrolment numbers across the sector although the College's enrolment did not appear to be affected.

7.1.4 College year 1 outcomes and progression were mixed and there was a strong focus on quality improvement, tracking and monitoring and positive progression for 2022/23.

7.1.5 Further work on the internal and external marketing and branding of T Levels was planned.

7.1.6 A comprehensive staff development programme to support T Level teaching and learning had been extended.

7.1.7 Other national headlines impacting on T Level strategy and curriculum development included a pilot to test T Level adult provision and the publication of the interim findings of the Ofsted Review which the College was using to refine practice.

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

7.2.1 **Did local employers know and care about T levels?** Some sectors did but others had been harder to engage, for example, engineering because of the 45-day work placement requirement.

- 7.2.2 **Were HE providers aware of T levels?** Nationally, 63% of universities would accept T levels although Russell Group institutions were less keen. The Government acknowledged it needed to do more to engage universities. Local universities were well engaged. The College was mapping T levels to support progression to University of Leicester courses.
- 7.2.3 **Was there any feedback from students as to why they moved to apprenticeships?** Some were still with the College but there was a need to get more feedback and understand destinations better. The transition programme was not necessarily the right route and so had been removed but there was a strong level 2 offer as an alternative.
- 7.2.4 **T levels were not for everyone; had there been an impact on adults?** It created the potential for a lack of alternative provision in to which adults could infill and the offer would need to be considered carefully.
- 7.2.5 **Was the grading similar to GCSEs?** It was complex and all parts of the T level were graded.
- 7.2.6 **Would T levels be covered by the QAR?** They would for 2023/24.

7.3 **Governors noted the information.**

8 KPI MONITORING

8.1 The Quality Development Manager gave an update on KPIs. The following points were highlighted.

- 8.1.1 Attendance was showing as 81.6% overall, which was slightly down on the previous year. For 16-18-year olds it was 82.4% which was down on the previous year. This was being investigated and followed up.
- 8.1.2 Retention was high at 99.4% and 99.9% for 16-18-year olds suggesting that more students were staying on their courses but might not be attending well.

8.2 In response to a **question** it was confirmed that attendance would be included in the QIP.

8.3 **Governors received and noted the update.**

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 There was no other business.

10 ABBEY PARK NURSERY INSPECTION

10.1 **Governors received and noted the report.**

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- 1 February 2023
- 26 April 2023
- 14 June 2023