

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

MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM STRATEGY AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2023



Present: Anne Frost (Chair) Danielle Gillett
Zoe Allman Verity Hancock
Lisa Armitage Maureen Magutu
Sam Emery

In Attendance: Louise Hazel Director of Governance and Policy
Kully Sandhu Vice Principal Adult and HE
Claire Willis Director of Quality Improvement (items 7-11)
Jody Kerrod Quality Development Manager (item 6)
Marco Salotti HE Manager (item 4)
Sharon Drury Mentoring Team Leader (item 5)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 1.1 There were no new declarations of interest. Zoe Allman had an interest in item 4 as an employee of DMU.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Shaun Curtis, Jai Sharda and Debi Donnarumma.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting on 9 November 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and approved.

4 CURRICULUM AREA FOCUS

- 4.1 The HE Manager gave a presentation on the work of the area and the College's submission to the Teaching Excellence Framework. The following points were highlighted.
- 4.1.1 The College was measured annually against the Office for Students (OfS) B3 student outcomes and on four-year basis through the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).
 - 4.1.2 The methodology for completing the TEF submission was outlined. A wide range of evidence had been gathered including student voice, external examiner reports, tutors report, surveys. This had enabled the team to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

- 4.1.3 The TEF was set up for typical three-year undergraduate courses so did not fit well with the nature of the College's offer, shape and size. It had therefore been necessary to explain the particular context of the College and provide additional evidence to support the narrative. For example, most students were not covered by the NSS and so the College's own student survey information had been used.
- 4.1.4 The themes emerging from the process were highlighted. The shape and size of the College's HE offer had changed significantly with the end of partnership activity. The OfS indicators were largely positive and had been supplemented by additional evidence. The progression metric (graduate outcomes) was below threshold although this was largely due to many students studying healthcare courses already being employed in the sector; delivery took place during the pandemic and so students were likely to be focusing on their existing work commitments. The College was nevertheless proud of the work with these students, many of whom were non-traditional HE students.
- 4.1.5 There was still work to do around the educational gain measure; guidance from the OfS on this was vague.

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

- 4.2.1 **What was the likely outcome?** It was difficult to say and it would depend on the TEF panel's view of the College's evidence. It should be at least a strong bronze, if not better.

4.3 **Governors thanked the HE Manager for his presentations and noted the information.**

5 **CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN/CARE LEAVERS**

- 5.1 The Mentoring team Leader presented a report on achievement rates for 2021/22. The following points were highlighted:
 - 5.1.1 The number of care experienced children/care leavers had risen significantly and was much higher than for other local colleges. In 2021/22 there were 140 (compared with 102 in 2020/21) students within these categories. There were 190 so far in the current year.
 - 5.1.2 A quarter had come through the UK care system, the rest were from other countries and included young people seeking asylum.
 - 5.1.3 The College had a designated person for care experienced children/care leavers. The College had also invested in additional support including a safeguarding officer; this meant that destinations data could be tracked and be used to plan work over the summer to help students at transition points.
 - 5.1.4 The College's approach to support these young people was described. It worked with 14 different local authorities and good links existed with external agencies. A range of strategies were used to allow the young people to access support and enable them to stay in learning.
 - 5.1.5 The College was successful in retaining the young people. Achievement data showed that 95% of the cohort completed their course and achieved their qualification.
 - 5.1.6 Examples of some of the students supported by the team were given;

the majority had achieved positive outcomes.

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

- 5.2.1 **There were lots of interventions to support the young people; was it possible to know if these were effective?** The retention and achievement data showed that they were effective in enabling the students to stay at College and progress. There were also lots of soft outcomes and how the students developed as individuals was also very important.
- 5.2.2 **Was it possible to compare the College with other institutions?** The College had much higher numbers of students than other institutions. Anecdotally, Virtual Schools was keen to send students to Leicester College because of its good wraparound support. It was hard to make comparisons because the College tended to have students with the most complex issues.
- 5.2.3 **How effective was work with other agencies?** This was working well. There was ongoing communication with social workers. The College needed to have a good relationship to be able to challenge as well as support. All agencies that were dealing with a young person were involved in the PEPs.
- 5.2.4 **With the increase in the number of young people in this cohort, what was the biggest risk?** Making sure they did not slip through the net and safeguarding were the biggest risks. Students sometimes came from other countries with different views of what was acceptable and so put themselves and others at risk. There were more vulnerable students in the College than ever before.
- 5.2.5 **Would the condition of funding be a barrier to these students?** It would but all elements of programmes were tracked and if students were falling behind, the team would contact Virtual Schools to see if any funding and/or support would be available.
- 5.2.6 **Would previously cared for students be included in the data?** This data was not shared with the College; there would be many in the College but the team worked with a trauma informed approach to young people.
- 5.2.7 **Did any policies need reviewing?** Policies were kept under review. The Fitness to Study had been introduced.

5.3 **Governors noted the information.**

6 **INTERNAL PROGRESSION REPORT**

6.1 The Quality Development Manager presented a report on Internal Progression. The following points were highlighted:

- 6.1.1 Overall, 27% of students internally progressed. Internal progression was stable with a 1% increase in students who completed and achieved and a 3% decrease in students that completed but did not achieve.
- 6.1.2 Internal progression for full-time students had decreased by 1% and by 3% for part-time students.
- 6.1.3 Students progressing to a higher level increased by 19% with 56% of full-time students and 48% of part time students progressed to a higher-

level programme.

- 6.1.4 The College's data compared well against other colleges.
- 6.1.5 There was little variance in rates of progression by ethnic group. There were 9% fewer females progressing internally compared to male students but this was mainly due to the qualification nature of some of the larger programme areas which tended to attract more male students.
- 6.1.6 The rate of internal progression for students with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) increased by 14% from the previous year but there were 30% fewer students with an EHCP progressing to a higher-level programme than those without.
- 6.1.7 Recommended actions were highlighted including ensuring clear careers education and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) at all stages of the student journey and ensuring internal progression opportunities were included in curriculum design.

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

- 6.2.1 **Where were the pockets of lower progression to higher levels?**
This was mainly in areas with level 3 BTECs; students might progress from a diploma to an extended diploma and this would look like lateral progression. ESOL also had a lot of students at entry level but it was not possible to disaggregate data by the three entry levels.
- 6.2.2 **Why might some disadvantaged students not want to aim higher?**
There might be lots of reasons; for some students it was not just about the qualification but about the life skills they needed. There was work to be done to promote positive role models particularly for supported learning students. Work was underway with the ETF.
- 6.2.3 **How were the recommendations to be implemented?** SLT had already considered and agreed the recommendations and they would be taken forward by the Vice Principals.
- 6.2.4 **Was it possible to see progression where a student might have taken a break and then come back to the College?** It was not possible to look at that level of data at the moment.

6.3 **Governors noted the report on Internal Progression.**

7 **LOWER PERFORMING AREAS**

- 7.1 The Director of Quality gave a presentation on lower performing areas. The following points were highlighted:
 - 7.1.1 Compared to 2018/19 EPYP NARs, the College had 17 programme areas below NARs. When trend data was reviewed against subject sector areas, five stood out: public services, engineering, service enterprises (hair and beauty), sport and accounting.
 - 7.1.2 Action had already been taken in several areas including removing provision; sport was showing an improving trend.
 - 7.1.3 Students had reported issues with uniform public services and this was now not felt to be a useful pathway. The offer was being reviewed while trying to ensure the best experience for existing students.
 - 7.1.4 Hairdressing and beauty were being monitored carefully. Attendance in

hairdressing was showing improvement on the previous year and some management issues had been addressed. Further work around initial vocational assessment was underway. Feedback from employers was very positive.

- 7.1.5 Accounting was showing a four year declining trend. The College needed to think about whether this was the right route for young people; the synoptic assessment was a hurdle. AAT had been contacted to see if there could be any changes made to the assessment methods but if no changes were made, it not be offered to 16-18s. Other providers would still offer it and so students would be directed to them. Alternative routes into accountancy including a level 1 pathway were needed.
- 7.1.6 Strategic and operational issues were highlighted. These were being worked through during curriculum planning, QAs and deep dives.

7.2 Governors asked a number of questions including:

- 7.2.1 **Was there something about how the qualifications were valued?** There was a difference between practical and theory for hairdressing. Practical sessions were delivered confidently.
- 7.2.2 **When would a decision be made about AAT?** After the exams in March/April.

7.3 Governors noted the information and requested an update on the decisions on the lowest performing courses in due course.

8 LANGUAGE STRATEGY

8.1 The Vice Principal presented the Language Strategy. The following points were highlighted.

- 8.1.1 The need and rationale for the strategy was outlined. The 2021 census showed that 26.7% of the post 16 population in Leicester did not have a GCSE or equivalent qualification. 35% of the College's intake of 16-19 year olds had achieved neither English nor maths.
- 8.1.2 The objectives of the strategy were to aid access to learning; improve progression; provide high quality discrete ESOL; improve the provision of language development and support; and improve staff continual professional development.
- 8.1.3 Immediate priorities were to focus on staff CPD including providing opportunities for staff to enhance their English language skills and develop appropriate learning strategies to support students' language development needs.
- 8.1.4 Improvements to the provision of language development and support would be put in place by implementing the learning support strategy, developing specialist learning support workshops to include language specific options and developing the underpinning language skills required for the subject sector areas.

8.2 Governors asked a number of questions including:

- 8.2.1 **How would the action plan be achieved?** A working group was overseeing this, meeting twice a term and reporting to SLT.

- 8.2.2 **Had the levels of achievement of English in Leicester got worse during the pandemic?** Achievement had historically been low and although showing improvement was still below the national. The College continued to recruit from areas of highest deprivation. Two thirds of the Leicester population lived in the 40% most deprived areas nationally; some students might have English speaking and listening at Entry or level but had literacy skills at pre-entry.
- 8.2.3 **Did the College's funding reflect the levels of deprivation and the additional costs?** There was a weighting factor but this was not enough to cover the additional costs.
- 8.2.4 **When would the impact of the KPIs be known?** This would take a while; training for staff was still needed but ultimately the strategy should impact on gaps in achievement in 2023/24 onwards.

8.3 **Governors noted the Language Strategy.**

9 **DEEP DIVES: SUMMARY TERM 1**

- 9.1 The Director of Quality Improvement presented a summary of issues from the deep dives in term 1. The following points were highlighted.
 - 9.1.1 There were 13 deep dives planned for 2022/23 on a three-week rolling cycle. Five had been undertaken in the first term and two more this term.
 - 9.1.2 Strengths identified during the deep dives included strong curriculum intent, with a clear rationale linked to local and regional needs; teachers having expert subject knowledge that enabled them to deliver their sessions well, with clear links to industry and the world of work; good participation in pedagogical and digital pedagogy CPD; clear expectations set by all staff in relation to student behaviour; good behaviour; students felt safe.
 - 9.1.3 Areas for improvement included more holistically planning and sequencing of delivery at programme level; more consistent participation in vocational CPD; improvements to feedback/forward; incomplete/inconsistent and poor quality target setting; attendance was too low; some aspects of personal development were patchy including Prevent with opportunities missed in vocational delivery to highlight naturally occurring topics.
 - 9.1.4 Actions to address these themes were outlined; these would be followed up during the QAs and future deep dives.
- 9.2 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**
 - 9.2.1 **There seemed to be inconsistencies in some areas; could these areas be targeted?** The intention was to focus on where training and support was needed in individual areas. CDCs would pick these up in Team Time.
 - 9.2.2 **Had the Deep Dives been useful?** They had, for those conducting them as well as in the areas being reviewed.
- 9.3 **Governors noted the information.**

10 QIP UPDATE

10.1 The Director of Quality Improvement gave an update on progress with the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The following points were highlighted.

10.1.1 KPIs were monitored throughout the academic year in termly VP compliance meetings, QA meetings and at CSQI. The evidence of impact for several actions would not be in place until the end of the academic year. However, KPI indicators showed that progress was being made.

10.1.2 Work to improve holistic sequencing was underway; new schemes of work and curriculum planning for next year would be picking this up.

10.1.3 Attendance was not where the College wanted it to be but it was on a par with other institutions.

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

10.2.1 **Most actions would be amber for a while; was this a concern?** Not if action was underway and KPIs showed there was progress. Progress points, monitoring of at risk students and rapid interventions would continue.

10.2.2 **It would be helpful to have a sense of movement and any areas of concern in future reports.** Noted.

10.3 **Governors noted the progress with the QIP.**

11 KPI MONITORING

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

11.1.1 Attendance was showing as 83.5% overall, which was down on the previous year. For 16-18-year olds it was 84.4% and adults 81.3%.

11.1.2 Retention was high at 96.7% overall and 95.9% for 16-18-year olds.

11.1.3 Progress data showed -0.04 against the target position. The new target setting methodology was felt to be working well. There were 326 students above target, 4500 on target, 2040 below and 790 on track to fail. English and maths and attendance issues accounted for around half of those identified at risk of failing. Lots of interventions were being put in place to support these students.

11.1.4 The data would be interrogated further in QA meetings.

11.2 In response to a **question** as to why progress at PP1 was higher, it was explained that by PP2 tutors would know students better; retention was also usually higher at PP1.

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

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 There was no other business.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

- 26 April 2023
- 14 June 2023