

Present: Jo Venn (Committee Chair), Yvonne Bradshaw, David Grime, Safaa Hafiz, Robert Cobourne, Graham Murphy, Tony Webster, Steven Haycocks, Clare Russell (Principal)

In Attendance: Zoe Smallman (Deputy Principal), Martin Rigby (Deputy Principal), Fatema Hussein (Head of Governance)

Meeting began: 1.30pm

Meeting closed: 3.30pm

Attendance: 81%

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Ben Houston and Jessica Gill.

The new Committee members Graham Murphy and Tony Webster were welcomed and introduced to the meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Governors / Members were invited to declare any pecuniary, personal or prejudicial interest in any matter on the agenda for the meeting

There were no declarations made.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9TH OCTOBER 2020

3.1 Approval of the Minutes

Agreed that: the minutes are approved as a correct record and authorised for publication.

3.2 Matters Arising

The actions progress log was reviewed, and the following update provided:

GCSE Attendance

Attendance was good and students were very engaged and motivated during the online lessons.

Student Survey Feedback

A follow up survey had been sent out to all A level students at the beginning of February and the results were due very shortly.

A Level Internal Progression

In response to the request at the previous meeting, a separate report had been circulated. This provided further information by individual subject, trend data on subjects that were being dropped and the number of students who had chosen 4 subjects and had continued with them.

Governors thanked the Deputy Principal Zoe Smallman for a very detailed and useful report.

4 BLENDED LEARNING & CURRICULUM DELIVERY UPDATE

The following update was provided by the Deputy Principals:

- Since 4 January 2021, all students (except for individual students entitled to come onto site to study) had been working remotely
- Students and teachers were following their normal College timetable, and all lessons included a live element when students were interacting with their teacher
- A review of remote education had been completed on a DfE template, and which demonstrated the strength of the remote provision at the College
- On a scale of 1-5 (5 high), College had self-assessed as 5 in all areas
- The A level blended delivery model used in the first term had ensured that A level teachers were developing their technological skills and confidence in delivering online lessons
- Extensive CPD directed towards effective online teaching learning and assessment had helped all teachers to develop their technological skills and confidence in advance of going into lockdown in January

The Student Governor reported that feedback from the Student Council had been positive. Teachers had adapted very well to the technology and were providing very good support to students.

The Staff Governor confirmed that a comprehensive list of training was available, and staff were continuing to share good practice and offer support to each other.

Governor Questions

Q. How many students had been on campus since January 2021?

A. 15 to 20 students were on campus each day most of whom were on Foundation study and skills courses. There were also some drama and dance students coming in to undertake their practical assessments

Q. Were learners experiencing any challenges with broadband or the availability of hardware?

A. College had been issuing laptops to students throughout the year. An additional 300 laptops had also been received from the DfE and these had been distributed

4.1 Student Return & Engagement

The meeting was informed that:

- Attendance had been excellent with Teachers reporting good levels of student engagement, particularly for Year 2 A level students
- Students and staff were concerned about how the centre Teacher assessment grades would be implemented for the summer exams
- Attendance on the Vocational programme was lower in comparison to previous years and feedback had been sought from learners
- Vocational attendance was being impacted by students being unable to undertake practical tasks in College
- These tasks were now being set for students to undertake at home

4.2 Student Survey Feedback

The Deputy Principal Zoe Smallman reported that:

- The final results of the A level student survey had been very positive
- A key theme that had emerged was students finding it difficult to differentiate between College work and private study work
- Support for students was being provided by the Study zone
- Another theme had been the quality of assessment and feedback that was being provided online by Teachers, and this was being explored further

5. MONITORING OF KEY ISSUES REPORT

The Committee reviewed and discussed the performance and targets for subjects identified as key issues.

Governor Questions

Q. Was the new CPD programme having an impact in L3 Engineering?

A. Two tutors had recently been appointed and there was rolling programme of drop-ins. There were now fewer staffing issues on the apprenticeship programme

Q. History was a concern as it had a large cohort of students. What measures had been implemented to ensure that outcomes improved?

A. SRG (Strategic Review Group) and SRB (Strategic Review Board) meetings had been undertaken and it was felt that the predicted grades reported in December had been too cautious. Some students were struggling with online learning

Q. Was management satisfied with the quality assurance process in light of the previous issues with the subject? Were there any issues that management may not be aware of?

A. Close monitoring was being undertaken by the Head of Studies

Q. Only a small number of A level Spanish students had responded to the student survey and this was concerning. What action was being taken to address the issues?

A. There was a small number of students taking Spanish and the Head of School was working with the subject tutor and providing appropriate support

6. 16-18 GCSE ENGLISH & MATHS*

- From September, all GCSE lessons had been delivered on-site, except for 2 lessons per week for Fast Track students sitting exams in November
- Both Maths and English GCSE teams were very pleased with the levels of engagement and motivation amongst GCSE students since moving fully online in January 2021
- Both teams were therefore considering whether it would be desirable/possible to maintain some element of online delivery next year

7. APPRENTICESHIP PROVISION - UPDATE & REVIEW AGAINST ACTION PLAN

The Deputy Principal Martin Rigby reported that management were confident that they now had full clarity and visibility over every learner. Achievement rates were moving in the right direction and College had put robust processes and a programme of CPD in place

8. SUMMER 2021 EXAMS & TEACHER ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The following update was provided by the Principal:

- The two DfE/Ofqual consultations regarding assessment in summer 2021 were published on Friday 15th January and closed on Friday 29th January
- Management were of the view that the proposals would lead to inconsistency and unfairness and add a very significant burden to already-stretched Schools and Colleges
- The College was proposing that it would be better for exam boards to set coursework-style tasks, which they also marked, to be completed by students within a set timeframe
- The Principal had responded to the consultation and written to professional associations and MPs, to express the College's views
- The consultation had not provided the opportunity to provide any opposing views to the Government's proposals
- A number of meetings had also been held with the AOC, SFCA and other College Principals but there had been no general agreement
- The outcome of the consultations would be known in mid to late February
- Plans for exams or other assessments this summer would not be finalised until then
- College was continuing to assess students very robustly and would continue to undertake formative assessments
- Runshaw would follow the Government guidance once it had been finalised and published

Governor Questions

Q. Did the College have a strategy to protect staff from parental pressure again this summer?

A. Support would be provided to staff and College would inform learners and parents of the approach that it planned to take

The Co-opted member Steven Haycocks stated that he had shared the College's response to the consultation with Secondary Headteachers who had endorsed Runshaw's position.

Governors discussed the pressure that College had faced from parents last year and this was a concern for summer 2021. They commended management for having dealt with the assessment crisis in a careful and considered way.

9. STAFF & STUDENT GOVERNOR FEEDBACK*

Staff and student feedback had been provided as part of Item 4.

10. RETENTION AND ATTENDANCE REPORTS

10.1 A-Level

- Year 1 retention was above target and only slightly below the historic high in 2015/16
- Cumulative attendance in both years was improving, and above target
- There had been some Year 2 learners who had withdrawn but College was confident that these were legitimate withdrawals
- Cumulative attendance at online lessons in both years was above target
- This was especially important given the current national lockdown and period of remote learning

Governor Questions

Q. Were there any particular subjects where retention was an issue?

A. Computer Science was a concern and the Head of Studies was following up on this

- Q.** English Literature attendance was lower than target. Was this because of the move to online learning?
- A.** The quality of the lessons and student engagement was high, and the situation would continue to be monitored

10.2 Vocational Programmes

- Level 1 retention was a concern particularly Health and Social Care
- The issue was with behaviour and not teaching and learning
- Additional Pastoral Mentor and Achievement Coach support and intervention was in place for those students most at risk with suitable targets and / or warnings to be implemented and followed up
- Parent/guardian meetings had also taken place
- A focus group linked to Teaching and Learning was taking place to establish student perceptions and feedback on online learning
- Students who had been identified as not engaging in online teaching and learning had been encouraged to attend onsite provision during lockdown
- Students who have identified not having access to a device as barrier to engagement and learning have been issued with a college laptop

Governor Questions

- Q.** What was the outcome from the Teaching and learning focus group?
- A.** These had not been reviewed yet, but the general feedback was that students were missing the practical elements of the course
- Q.** How many of the students who were not engaging in online learning were attending sessions on campus?
- A.** It was 3 or 4 students
- Q.** Had consideration been given to a transition programme for Vocational students as there were similar transitional issues in FE /6th form transition to University?
- A.** There was a plan to introduce a transition/ pre-induction programme in addition to the New Student Day in the summer where students who had applied to study a L2 course (internal and external) would attend a short bridging course

Governors agreed that robustness in entry requirements and an access programme would give the College the opportunity to assess individuals.

10.3 Higher Education

- No students had withdrawn from their HE courses, and retention at 100% was well above target and above average for this time of year
- One course had a below-target attendance at 87% (BA(Hons) Community and Social Care)
- This was one student with very low attendance, and this was impacting on the attendance of the group overall
- HE provision was not continuing next year

Governor Questions

- Q.** Was the College's decision to withdraw from H.E. provision widely known?
- A.** It was in the public domain with minimal feedback having been received. The members of staff who were involved with the programme had been disappointed with the decision but there had been no job losses

10.4 Adult College FE Provision

- The overall retention was 92% and on target
- Overall cumulative attendance was also above target
- 6 courses had 100% retention
- Although below target, attendance in Access to Social Sciences, GCSE English and Functional Skills English had improved significantly compared to last year

10.5 Apprenticeships (interim achievement rates)

The Deputy Principal Martin Rigby reported that:

- Achievement rates were significantly above national benchmarks in some areas
- Staff had undertaken a number of best practice visits to other Outstanding Colleges
- College was confident that good progress was being made in this area

11. STRATEGIC PLAN MONITORING REPORTS 2020/2021

The relevant chapters of the Strategic Plan which set out key actions required and indicated progress to date with them were reviewed.

11.1 Chapter 6 – Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Support

Governor Questions

Q. The pandemic had radically altered teaching delivery. Should the Board at some point in the future, reflect on how some of the best blended learning practice might be incorporated into teaching and learning delivery post pandemic?

A. The Principal stated that the approach to blended learning was constantly being refined and adapted, and College planned to maintain some element of online delivery next year

Q. Had there been any issues with the implementation of the new tracking system for vocational learners?

A. It was confirmed that the system was operating well with no particular issues

11.2 Chapter 7 – Student Support Services

Governors congratulated all student services staff for the comprehensive range of virtual enrichment activities that continued to be provided to students.

The Student Governor confirmed that the enrichment offer was appreciated by students as it provided them with an opportunity to learn new skills.

11.3 Chapter 8 – Quality

All actions were on track to be completed except for the replacement of the Student record system.

Governors agreed that it was pleasing to see the progress that was being made with the collection of destinations data.

12. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee reviewed the report and it was noted that:

- There has been an increased focus on supporting student mental health and wellbeing
- College had recruited a new Wellbeing and Mental Health Facilitator as well as student mental health champions to support this important work

- Analysis had shown that there were no statistically significant differences in achievement rates between the vast majority of groups of different learners both at the whole College level or course level
- Achievement rates of learners classed as Children Looked After (CLA) had increased from 61% to 84% in 2019-20

In response to a question, the Student Governor stated that Runshaw Radio helped students to feel connected and the setting up of a LGBT group had been positively received by students.

A Governor suggested that College employed adults with learning disabilities as this was beneficial for both staff and students.

The Principal stated that College was a disability confident employer and did employ staff with learning difficulties.

13. RISK REGISTER

The relevant section of the risk register was reviewed, and it was noted that there were currently 2 high risks under the remit of the Committee.

14. GOVERNANCE IMPACT STATEMENT

- Governor suggestion re access and transition courses for Vocational programmes
- Discussion on exam arrangements will ensure that Governors are aware of the key challenges re Summer 2021 assessments
- Student and Staff Governor feedback on remote learning
- Monitoring of key issues and deep dive discussion on Spanish and History
- Monitoring of GCSE attendance
- Review of equality and diversity ensures Governors are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities

Governors thanked all staff at the College for their hard work and dedication in providing outstanding teaching and support to learners under very challenging circumstances.

15. APPROVAL OF RESERVED BUSINESS MINUTES – 9TH OCTOBER 2020

Agreed: that the minutes are approved as a correct record.

15.1 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Discussed under reserved business.

16. GDPR / CONFIDENTIALITY*

Governors were reminded of the requirement to maintain confidentiality and comply with GDPR regulations.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 7th May 2021 at 1.30pm

Chair's Signature

Date:

*Standing Item