

Time: 5.15pm

Venue: Runshaw College (Virtual Meeting held via MS Teams)

Present: Warren Middleton (Chair), Yvonne Bradshaw, Jo Venn, Ade Oladapo, Clare Russell (Principal), Jacqui Chatwood, Robert Cobourne, Safaa Hafiz, Martina Jay, Graham Murphy, Alison Watson-Bird

In Attendance Martin Rigby (Deputy Principal), Zoe Smallman (Deputy Principal), Janet Ivill (Director of Finance), Fatema Hussein (Head of Governance)

Meeting began 5.15pm

Meeting closed 7.00pm

Attendance 78%

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Portia Bailey, Joshi Jariwala and Michael Lowe.

2. Declarations of Interest

Governors were invited to declare any direct, indirect, pecuniary, personal or prejudicial interest relating to any item on the agenda for the meeting.

Jo Venn declared an interest in item 7

Alison Watson-Bird declared an interest in Item 8

3. Minutes of The Meeting Held on 5th July 2021

3.1 Approval of the Minutes

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2021 are signed as a correct record and authorised for publication (Part 1)

3.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The action progress log was reviewed, and it was noted that:

- RSM had not yet confirmed if a note was required in the accounts regarding the treatment of the Barclays loan variation
- The December Safeguarding report to the Board would include individual cohort numbers as requested by Governors
- The People & OD Committee needed to be added to the relevant column in the Governor Dashboard

Governor Questions

Q. Was the financial statements audit being undertaken in College or remotely?

A. A mixture of onsite and remote auditing work had been carried out

RESOLVED:

Governors agreed that the above actions were carried forward and remained on the log

ACTION:

Head of Governance to update the log

4. Recruitment 2021 – Presentation

4.1 Sixth Form College

4.2 Adult College

The Principal delivered a presentation on 2021 recruitment and the following points were noted:

- 16-18 enrolment had been very positive with students continuing to enrol
- 5134 students had been enrolled to date and College was on track to meet the census target
- Adult and Apprenticeship recruitment was equally positive with a mixture of online, telephone and face to face interviews having been undertaken
- The vaccine offer on site during enrolment had been positively received by both students and parents with very high take up rates
- Students were being encouraged to continue with twice weekly testing
- There were currently 19 students and 3 staff who had tested positive for Covid
- The ten key Covid control measures had been revised down to five

Governor Questions

Q. Was any data available on the percentage of students who were retaking the whole year again?

A. The conditions for retaking a whole year were restrictive and not many students would be eligible to do this

5. Teacher Assessed Grades / Results

The Deputy Principals reported on the Teacher Assessed Grades / results, and it was confirmed that the results would be reviewed in further detail by the Standards & Curriculum Committee.

5.1 A Level

- Top grades, highest grades and high grades had all increased significantly on previous years
- Value added had returned to the levels previously achieved before the “dip” in 2019 and this may suggest that teachers awarded grades commensurate with those that were expected and based on students’ prior attainment
- There was no benchmarking data for 2021 results, as they were based on teacher assessment, and it was difficult to draw conclusions or comparisons with results in examination years
- A level subjects on the key issues list all met or exceeded their targets except for three courses with significant practical elements

Governor Questions

Q. Was there any data available on the number of students deferring University places?

A. This was not available but there had been a large number of students who had deferred their places last year

Q. If remote learning had worked well in many areas of the curriculum, why had the decision been made to revert to face-to-face teaching?

A. Teachers were of the view that face to face teaching was more beneficial than remote. The College wanted to provide students with a holistic experience which included enrichment opportunities and preparing students for their next steps. Students would also need to be prepared for exams next year and it was felt that this was best done in person

A Governor suggested that it may be beneficial to retain some elements of remote learning and that consideration was given to how it could be utilised to benefit future learners.

5.2 Advanced Vocational

- High grades and highest grades on the 2-year Extended Diploma (ED) had fallen in comparison to previous years
- However, this was the first year of the RQF results; a reformed specification that was more challenging
- A comparison to national benchmark (NBM) data confirmed that results very positive, (+36.28% above NMB for high grades, +30.37% above NMB for highest grades and +31.83% above NBM for the top grades)
- Headline results for the L3 Foundation Diploma (or equivalent) (Year 1) remained very pleasing despite the move to the more challenging RQF specification and the disruption caused by COVID-19
- Highest grades and top grades on the Foundation Diploma (FD) had fallen in comparison to previous years. The majority of Year 1 subjects had moved to the RQF in 19/20
- A comparison to national benchmark (NBM) data confirmed that results were strong, (+37.22% above NMB for high grades, +27.92% above NMB for highest grades and the top grades)
- The programme level Extended Diploma (2 year) Alps score (a measure of value added) remained a grade 2, which was outstanding and particularly pleasing due to the move to the RQF

5.3 Pre-Advanced Vocational

- Headline results for L2 vocational courses remained very positive despite the disruption caused by COVID-19
- The high grades, highest grades and top grades were lower in comparison to 2019/20 data
- However, 2019/20 data was based on CAGs, which were derived from incomplete units and a reduced assessment plan
- The outcomes for 20/21 were based on TAGs that covered, in most cases, the full assessment plan, which was more comparable to a 'full delivery' associated with 2018/19
- High grades and highest grades had improved with respect to 18/19 data
- A comparison to national benchmark (NBM) data confirmed that results were still incredibly strong, (+40.53% above NMB for high grades, +26.44% above NMB for highest grades and +15.87% above NBM for the top grades)

5.4 GCSE

- Although GCSE results were Teacher Assessed Grades, results in both GCSE Maths and GCSE English had significantly improved on previous years

- College was conscious that due to possible grade inflation for the GCSE results of incoming students, new GCSE resit students could find both courses more challenging than usual in the coming year
- College had closed a large number of GCSE Maths/English classes because numbers of GCSE resit students in both subjects were significantly reduced
- To address concerns about the knowledge and skill of incoming GCSE Maths/English resit students, all GCSE resit classes would be smaller than usual
- College was planning to provide additional individual and small group support by making use of 16-19 Tuition Funding
- As GCSE resit numbers were usually consistent year on year, it was assumed that many more students than usual had been awarded grade 4 or above in Maths/English and were therefore accessing College programmes that did not include a GCSE resit

Governor Questions

Q. Would there be any staffing implications as a result of fewer GCSE students?

A. Teaching hours would be redirected to supporting students on Level 3 programmes. The lower number of students had also led to a reduction in the level of funding received by College to support disadvantaged students

5.5 Adult F.E. & H.E.

- Not all Adult FE results were available, and it was not possible to analyse overall high grade and pass rate data
- Of the courses with complete data sets, most had achieved a 100% pass rate
- The PGCE had achieved a 100% pass rate
- The pass rate for the L2 Foundation Certificate in Accounting had fallen to 87.5% this year (from 100% last year)
- High grades and pass rates were disappointing in BA (Hons) Community and Social Care and FD in Criminology and Criminal Justice
- This was the last year that HE was running
- Online delivery for access courses had impacted on retention data

Governors requested that their thanks were passed onto all staff for their dedication and efforts in ensuring that the Teacher Assessed grades process was robust and well implemented

6. Principal's Report

The Principal presented her report and the following points were highlighted:

- College was progressing with plans for two projects: Buttermere building, a 1000m² building at the front of the campus, and Coniston building, a 4000m² building at the rear of the campus, replacing Dalehead single storey
- Both were in line with the overarching Estates Strategy
- Two out of the three funding bids had been unsuccessful, and College was awaiting the outcome of the third bid which was expected this term
- All key management vacancies had been filled
- Further improvements had been made to the organisation of the student-facing services teams
- Improvements had also been made to the Student Services area, and the staff lounge had been relocated
- The Covid risk assessment had been updated to include the new control measures
- In collaboration with North and West Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, and a number of Northwest Colleges, Runshaw was leading on the development of the Centre for Digital Excellence as part of the Skills Accelerator fund

- The College had been shortlisted as a finalist for the Educational Establishment of the Year at the Bibas (Be Inspired Business Awards) and had come second

The Board congratulated College on being shortlisted as a finalist in the Biba awards

6.1 Estates Strategy / Funding Bids Update

Discussed as part of Item 6.

7. Election / Appointment – Vice-Chair of the Board

The Head of Governance advised that one nomination (Jo Venn) had been received for Vice-Chair of the Board and this had been included on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

A vote was taken, and it was agreed that Jo Venn be appointed Vice-Chair of the Board with effect from 7th December 2021

8. Election / Appointment - Chair of the Search & Governance Committee

The meeting was informed that one nomination (Allison Watson-Bird) had been received for Chair of the Search & Governance Committee and this had been included on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

A vote was taken, and it was agreed that Alison Watson-Bird be appointed Chair of the Search & Governance Committee with effect from 7th December 2021

8.1 Board and Committee Meeting Arrangements for 2021/22

Governors discussed meeting arrangements for the current academic year and the return to in person meetings.

The Chair proposed that all meetings were held in College and requested that any Governors who had concerns in relation to attending physical meetings contacted him directly for a confidential discussion.

Governors suggested that a larger room with adequate ventilation was used for Board and Standards & Curriculum Committee meetings as an additional precautionary measure.

ACTION:

Head of Governance to ascertain if a bigger meeting room was available

9. Governor / Co-opted Member Appointments

The Chair of Search & Governance reported that following interviews, the Committee was making the following recommendations for Governor / Co-opted member appointments:

- Dominic Martinez to be appointed as a member of the Board and the Standards & Curriculum Committee
- David Chamberlain to be appointed as a Co-opted member of the Finance Committee
- Richard Evans to be appointed as a Co-opted member of the Standards & Curriculum Committee
- Warren Middleton to be re-appointed to the Board
- Joshi Jariwala to be reappointed to the Board

RESOLVED:

The Board endorsed the recommendations of the Search & Governance Committee and agreed that the above appointments were approved.

It was noted that a Support Staff Governor election was to be organised as the existing Staff Governor had left College to take up another post.

10. Policies

The proposed policy changes were highlighted to Governors.

10.1 Health, Safety & Well Being

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Health, Safety & Well Being policy

10.2 6th Form Admissions

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the 6th Form Admissions policy

10.3 Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Child Protection & Vulnerable Adults policy

11. Finance Update 2021 / 22 Budget

The Director of Finance reported that:

- A healthy surplus had been achieved for the 2020/21 financial year
- Good financial health had been maintained and loan covenants achieved
- A decision on the final capital funding bid was being awaited
- 16-19 enrolment was on target and bus pass sales had been positive
- The increase in national insurance contributions from next April would lead to increased costs
- Student transport services were also anticipated to cost more this year
- The budget for the current year would have to be closely monitored to ensure that all financial KPI's were met

12. Safeguarding Annual Report

The Deputy Principal Zoe Smallman presented the report and it was noted that:

- Safeguarding arrangements continued to be robust during the pandemic
- Online Safeguarding & Counselling were provided via email, text, phone and Zoom
- Most issues related to Mental Health and General Health and Wellbeing
- Weekly emails were sent to check on the wellbeing of all Looked After Children/ Independently Living Students / Young Carers and other vulnerable Students
- Emotional support was offered via email, phone and online platforms from the counselling team for students
- A COVID closure had happened in May and occurred during Mental Health Awareness Week
- Plans for support had been quickly adapted with online workshops being offered

- Overall, the number of students referred to the end of June 2021 was 503 in comparison to 389 at the same point last year.
- The highest number of referrals continued to relate to Health and Wellbeing
- The number of leavers was 79 compared to 56 at the same time last year
- There were 9 referrals under Prevent to the end of June 2021. No students were referred to Channel
- There were no incidents that required referral to the LADO

13. Risk Register – High Risks & Key Movements

The Director of Finance advised that:

- The key change to the register was the increased risk of a drop in success rates in relation to COVID related differential learning loss
- Strategies to address this had been included in the 2021/22 strategic plan
- Additional dedicated resources had been made available in this year's budget via the ESFA 16-19 tuition fund (£350k) and the successful College Collaboration Fund (CCF) bid for lost learning (£75k)

Governor Questions

Q. Were arrangements being made for Governors to attend the SAR validation meetings?

A. Meetings would be taking place week commencing 8th November and Governors would be invited to attend

14. Issues from Data Dashboard

The Board reviewed and noted the updates to the dashboard which was used to monitor key College performance indicators.

15. Annual Governance Report

The annual governance report for the year ended 31 July 2021 covered the following:

- Governor Attendance
- Governance developments
- Appointments and Retirements
- Governance self-assessment and performance review activity

The Head of Governance reported that:

- Attendance for 2020/2021 at 90%, was above the 80% target set by Governors and in line with the average in the sector
- 12 Governors had recorded 100% attendance at Corporation meetings
- Governors continued to play a key strategic role in ensuring that key performance indicators were met, and several initiatives had been implemented to further strengthen governance, which included:
 - Establishing a task and finish group to develop a stakeholder engagement strategy and plan
 - New Board and Committee member appointments which would ensure that the Board continued to have an appropriate mix of skills and further improve diversity
 - Revisions to the Governors dashboard to enhance Governor monitoring of key performance indicators
 - The formation of a task and finish group to formulate a long-term Estates strategy including the submission of capital funding bids
 - Virtual learning walks to monitor the effectiveness of the College's online learning arrangements

RESOLVED:

The Board noted the report which provided additional assurance that governance arrangements continued to be effective and were reviewed regularly.

16. Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance

The meeting was informed that it was a requirement for all Governors to read Part 1 and Annex B of the guidance which had recently been updated to include peer on peer abuse.

The Safeguarding Governor confirmed that the guidance had also been reviewed in detail at the recent Safeguarding Steering group meeting.

Board members confirmed that that they had read and noted the guidance.

It was suggested that Governors completed the Safeguarding network online quiz which would assist in confirming their understanding of the guidance. A link to the quiz had been emailed to all Governors.

17. Governance Impact Statement

- Governor monitoring of recruitment data to ensure that target was on track to be met
- Governor challenge and discussion on the benefits of remote learning and how this could continue be included as part of teaching and learning
- Timely election of Vice-Chair and Chair of Search & Governance will ensure that there is a smooth transition
- Approval of policies ensures that Governors are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities
- Discussion re impact of lower number of GCSE Maths & English students
- Review of financial forecast / outlook and consideration of key financial risks

18. Reserved Business Minutes

18.1 Corporation Meeting Minutes Part 2 - 5th July 2021

The reserved business minutes were approved as a correct record.

18.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

18.3 Any other Reserved Business Matters

No other reserved business matters were raised.

19. Date of Next Meeting

Governors SAR Meeting
Tuesday 5th October 2021 at 8.00am

Board
Monday 6th December 2021 at 5.00pm