



MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON

Date: Tuesday 23rd September 2014
Venue: Sixth Form College
Room: Committee Room
Time: 1715hrs - 1900hrs

Present: Mr J Boyle (Chair)
Mrs C Bellamy
Mr S Brennand
Mr J Corry
Mr G Curry
Mr A Goodinson
Ms F Greeves OBE
Ms W Middlemas
The Rev Dr R Murphy
Ms J Trembles
Mr N Webster
Mr N Wilson

Together with: Ms G Yeadon (Deputy Principal)
Ms S Benson (Director of Learning)
Mrs A Pickup (Director of Finance & HR)
Mr A Lloyd (Vice Principal Information Systems and Resources)
Miss E Trotter (FCAT Corporate Services Lead)
Mrs K Buddle (Governance Administrator, FCAT)
Ms L Atkinson (Head of Business and Information Technology –for the presentation)

Apologies: Apologies were received from Cllr D Clapham, Mrs K Clowes, Mr S Sheard, Ms K Talboys and Mr P Welsh.

59.2014

Preliminaries

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Governors were informed that Ellie Bradley had been appointed to the vacant Student Governor position pending approval from the Search and Governance Committee. The position of NHS Governor had also been filled.

This meeting was the first of its type following the decision to withdraw the Strategic Planning and Standards Committee and provide all members of the Corporation with the opportunity to participate in strategic matters for the College. In order to ensure all governors had the chance to read and digest information for the meetings, the Chair requested that those submitting papers for the meeting should have their papers with the Clerk seven working days before the meeting to enable the Clerk to circulate the full agenda to governors a week before each meeting.

Action

He emphasised that verbal and tabled reports would not normally be accepted.

60.2014 Presentation – Lorraine Atkinson, Business and Information Technology

Governors received a presentation from the Head of Business and Information Technology. A total of 522 students were studying A level subjects within the Department. These included combinations of Business Studies, Computing, Economics and ICT, depending on the academic level of the student. Courses were proving to be very popular and attracting increasing numbers.

There were 566 students taking BTEC qualifications including Single Business, Double Business and Business and Finance BTECs. The Business and Finance BTEC had been introduced last year and was very popular.

The Department was working hard to ensure students were given opportunities to study a choice of subjects appropriate to their needs. It was felt that this was one of the main reasons for the Department's success. Alongside this, staff were ensuring that students received appropriate support to help them achieve their goals and that a nurturing environment to help young people develop their life skills as well as their academic attainment, was maintained. This was reflected in the Department's mission statement – 'everyone is an individual - an exception to be valued'.

Following a request from governors, Lorraine provided a brief history of her career at College, explaining that she had risen to become the Head of Business and IT after starting out as a part time supply teacher in economics. She was now in her 22nd year at the College and proud to be a part of its continuing success.

Challenge

Asked about the performance of students in two of the courses under her remit, Lorraine confirmed that 96% had achieved A* - C grades in the Level 2 Finance qualification (89% had achieved grades A* - B) and 77% had achieved A* - C in GCSE Enterprise and Employment.

Governors congratulated Lorraine on the success of her Department and thanked her for her presentation and contribution to the College. She left the meeting.

Following the presentation, governors commented on the fact that departments seemed to be developing their own mission statements. The Deputy Principal explained that Heads of Department had been asked to do this in order to develop their own distinct ethos and motivation towards attaining standards. The Principal asked for a quality check to be made on all the departmental mission statements to make sure that they linked into the College's overarching statement.

GY

- 61.2014** **Declarations of interest**
None.
- 62.2014** **Consideration of any items of urgent business**
None.
- 63.2014** **Minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2014**
The minutes of the meeting were approved.
- 64.2014** **Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda**
- a) **Governor representation on the Sustainability Group** (Item 39.2014) – Mrs Clowes was now established as Governor representative on the Group. Meetings of the Group are still to be scheduled.
 - b) **Ofsted model questions and answers** (Item 39.2014) – following the training session for governors, a list of potential questions and answers had been added to the shared folder on Google Drive for governors’ information.
 - c) **Filepath trails** (Item 42.2014) – these had now been added to documents to show the validation process.
 - d) **Amendment to graph in Principal’s Report** (Item 42.2014) – this had been made and recirculated to governors in Paper 6.1a.
 - e) **Impact of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) on the Data Dashboard figures** (Item 42.2014) – the Principal reported that she was waiting for a reply to her letter to the Department for Education (DfE) regarding the discrepancies raised as a result to the changes to the way in which BTECs were measured against A Level qualifications.
 - f) **New local authority safeguarding procedures** (Item 44.2014) – a review of these has been scheduled into the programme of FCAT Safeguarding Board meetings.
 - g) **Health and Safety Report No 4** (Item 48.2014) – this was presented to governors for their approval (Paper 6.1b).

Challenge

Asked about the insurance claim mentioned in the Report, the Vice Principal explained that this followed an incident where a reception door fell onto a student. The claim was submitted a few months after the event. Governors were reassured that the claim was being handled by the insurers on behalf of the College and was not a material risk.

Following a brief discussion, Health and Safety Report No 4 was approved.

- h) **Audit Committee minutes 17th June 2014** (Item 53.2014) – the minutes had been amended to emphasise the fact that new members of staff with responsibility for particular risks were all Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members.

64.2014 D1 Resolved: to approve Health and Safety Report No 4.

65.2014 Chair's Actions

The Chair reported the following two actions undertaken since the previous meeting:

- a) **Accommodation Strategy** – approval had been given to staff to put in place actions in response to the contractors for Phase 5 of the building works, Globe MSL, going into liquidation. A full update report would follow this item.
- b) **Appointment of new Principal** – agreement had been given to increase the annual leave entitlement for the new Principal, by five days, in line with other senior staff on the establishment.

66.2014 Accommodation Strategy Update

Governors considered a report from the Vice Principal on the progress of the building works (Paper 8.1). Globe MSL, the contractors for the completion of Phase 4 and the development of Phase 5, had ceased trading and the report highlighted actions put in place in light of that. Phase 4 and most of the enabling works for Phase 5 are complete. The contract for Phase 5 itself has now gone out to tender.

Challenges

Governors asked about the financial implications of the situation for the College. The Vice Principal explained that payment for the latest works completed had not yet been made but that the Receiver would be asking for this imminently. An agreement had been negotiated with the Receiver to subtract the amount of money we would need to have the enabling works for Phase 5 completed by a new contractor. The original estimate for the works was likely to rise. The Vice Principal was fairly confident that the estimates for the new tender were accurate as they were based in Globe MSL's prices. However, it was acknowledged that prices for some items, for example equipment hire, were likely to increase and this would impact on the final price.

Asked about the impact on the warranties for the finished works, the Vice Principal confirmed that this would only affect the work on the temporary staircase which would be demolished anyway after a year. A Performance Bond was also in place.

In response to a question, the Vice Principal confirmed that the financial strength of the contracting company had been a criterion in the original tender document.

Governors were informed that no decisions were needed at the current time as delegated powers had been given to staff to ensure the delivery of the next steps. Responses to the tender were due by 17th October 2014. A meeting of the Accommodation Working Party would need to be scheduled during the week beginning 3rd November 2014 to consider these. The Clerk was asked to make the arrangements for the meeting. The Vice Principal would provide the papers to members of the Working Party.

KB/ET

AL

66.2014 D1 Resolved: to accept the report from the Vice Principal on the progress of the Accommodation Strategy.

67.2014 Summer Examination Results

Governors considered a report and supporting papers from the Director of Learning on the College's summer examination results (Paper 9.1). The Principal explained that the College was challenging three Arts subject results and, possibly, one English Literature result.

Overall, the results were very positive, with performance in BTEC qualifications particularly strong. The College was in the top 25% nationally in terms of achievements and value added across BTECs, A Levels and AS Levels. Pass rates and progress rates in A Level subjects were similar to last year. However, there had been a decline in expected progress by the highest ability students.

There had been declines too in the pass rates for some specific subjects including Biology, Chemistry, Maths (AS Levels and Statistics), Geography and Psychology. These had been identified for targeted support by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and actions were already in place to address issues.

Performance in English GCSE had improved by 10% to 66%. This reflected the extra hour per week of lessons in this subject added to the timetable. The College aimed to do similar with GCSE Maths this year.

The AS results needed careful scrutiny as pass rates had declined by 3.4% to 87%. It was felt that this was due, in part, to the fact that, for the first time, this cohort of students had not been obliged to complete modules in January. In past years, the January modules had allowed staff the opportunity to assess individual progress and implement remedial action where needed. It was also noted that there was some correlation between performance in AS levels and use by students of iPads. Actions were in place to provide additional support in this area, especially in the organisation of files.

Although it was acknowledged that there were a number of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) teaching AS level subject, in actuality, the performance of most of their students had been very good. This reflected the good NQT programme in place at the Teaching School.

Challenges

In response to a question from governors about actions to address poor performing subjects, the Director of Learning explained that meetings had been held with relevant Subject Leads to identify next steps. The Director of Learning and the Deputy Principal would be overseeing improvements directly. As part of this, lesson observations and checks on student work and the impact of feedback to students would be carried out. A report on the outcomes of the actions, including October and November progress data, would be brought to the next meeting of the Corporation.

SB

Asked about further steps if improvements were not seen to be happening by November, the Director of Learning confirmed that staff would then need to be considered for capability appraisals.

Assessments of the subject choice of students at enrolment and the staffing in different subject areas had been carried out. Mock examinations had been brought forward to January to allow staff the opportunity to identify and address particular issues in time for summer examinations, and conversations with students on the seriousness of mock examinations had taken place.

Governors remarked on the need for a report on the performance of new teachers and other risks that might impact on future results. The Director of Learning agreed to provide this for the next meeting.

SB

In response to a question about whether or not there were management issues that might have impacted on results, the Director of Learning acknowledged that a number of new staff had joined the College recently and that this might have had a bearing.

It was noted that the College had still been unable to fill the Head of Science position and that this was an area of concern. The Principal informed governors that Science was an issue for educational establishments across the Fylde Coast generally. Fylde Coast Academy Trust (FCAT) had also advertised for a Director of Learning in Science to support schools and academies in improving performance in Science at all levels. However, recruitment to senior positions on the Fylde Coast was proving to be very difficult and it was accepted that a significant amount of work was needed to promote the area to future employees.

Governors raised the probability that the College was trying to provide too many courses at too many different levels and should reassess its desired student profile. It was felt that the original remit to provide courses for exceptional students, had perhaps been lost. The Principal and Chair confirmed that the new incumbent to post would be charged with reviewing this matter and to assess the future priorities.

Asked about whether it would be useful to de-couple the A and AS Level courses from the BTECs, the Principal explained that the choice of courses offered currently by the College was one of its strengths and a decision to amend this would impact on student numbers at the College.

Following a question from governors about issues that might be raised at an Ofsted inspection, the Principal confirmed that Science would be identified as an area of concern which is why the College needed to provide a strong focus on this.

Governors thanked the Director of Learning for her report.

67.2014 D1 Resolved: to accept the report from the Director of Learning on the impact of the Summer Examination Results.

68.2014 Disadvantaged Funding Strategy

Governors considered a report from the Deputy Principal on the impact of the Disadvantaged Funding Strategy on the summer examination results (Paper 9.2). The aim of the Strategy is for students in receipt of the funding to perform as well as, or better than, their peers i.e. closing the gap between the two groups. The College spends more on support of students supported by disadvantaged funding than it receives in income.

At Level 3, closing the gap students performed as well as their counterparts at AS Level, A Level and BTEC. At Level 2, although the gap in the pass rate had reduced by 2.2 percentage points between the mock exams and the summer exams, there remained a 0.7 percentage point gap and the gap in the pass rate at A*-C had remained static at 2.0 percentage points. The gap represented approximately 7 students.

Actions were in place to continue closing of the gap in terms of attainment. Another report would be brought to the next meeting to demonstrate progress made.

GY

Governors thanked the Deputy Principal for her report.

68.2014 D1 Resolved: to accept the report from the Deputy Principal on the impact of the Disadvantaged Funding Strategy on Summer Examination Results.

69.2014 Enrolment

Governors considered a report from the Principal on enrolment for 2014 – 2015 (Paper 10.1).

The estimated number of students in College was 2231 though there had been a lot of late enrolments so the actual number might rise.

Late entries had come, largely, from students who had originally enrolled at different establishments, including private schools, only to find that their courses had been withdrawn due to shortage of numbers. There had been 10 late entries from Baines School. This reflected the drop in grades at GCSE level across the Fylde Coast. The Upper 6th had more students than any previous cohort. There was a slightly lower number of students in the Lower 6th than the previous year, again, due mainly to the drop in GCSE grades and passes but this was in line with target predictions.

Challenges

In response to a question from governors about financing courses, the Principal confirmed that the College was not allowed to charge students unless they were non-European Union students. It was noted that some Department for Education (DfE) funding for those students who turned 18 before they finished their courses was lost each year. This amounted to the equivalent of approximately one member of staff.

Asked about future recruitment to the College, the Principal highlighted the fact that it would be heavily reliant on the performance of feeder schools, including South Shore Academy (the former Palatine School) and Fleetwood High School, at GCSEs.

When questioned about the most popular courses, the Principal explained that there had been very high numbers of applications for places on the Business and IT courses. The courses were full.

In response to a question about limiting numbers of students in the Science and Maths courses, the Principal explained that only those students that attained three A grades in Science subjects and Maths at GCSE were allowed to take Science and Maths at A Level.

Governors thanked the Principal for her report.

69.2014 D1 Resolved: to accept the report from the Principal on enrolment for 2014-2015.

70.2014 Strategic Development Plan 2013 – 2014

Governors considered a report from the Deputy Principal on the final review of the Strategic Development Plan 2013 – 14 (Paper 11.1). It was noted that some of the figures in the report were provisional. All objectives had been achieved or partially achieved.

The Deputy Principal drew governors' attention to significant improvements in the persistent absenteeism of students. There had been a reduction of 4.1% and an increase in attendance of 1.1%.

Challenges

Governors asked about how progress on the objectives that had not yet been fully achieved would be monitored. The Deputy Principal confirmed that these would be reviewed in the end of year evaluation and further support provided where necessary.

Asked about how the SLT would ensure that staff were predicting grades accurately in future (Item 2.3 on the Plan), the Deputy Principal explained that more accurate hard data was now available to staff which should remove the need for predictions. However, the SLT would be keeping a watch on this to ensure realistic forecasting.

Governors thanked the Deputy Principal for her report.

70.2014 D1 Resolved: to accept the report from the Deputy Principal on the Strategic Development Plan 2013-2014.

71.2014 Finance

The Head of Finance and HR presented a report on the Year End accounts (Paper 12.1). Normally, the monthly reports would be presented to the Administration and Finance Committee in advance of the full Corporation meeting, but due to the fact that this was an additional meeting, there was an opportunity for all governors to view the first draft of the accounts. The final set of accounts will go to the Administration and Finance Committee in November 2014 and then to the Corporation in December 2014.

There were no real changes from the May 2014 month end accounts. The surplus stood at £737,889 compared to a forecast surplus of £217,710. There was a write down of the buildings demolished to make way for Phases 4 and 5 of the campus redevelopment programme. This will not impact on the College's financial health grade.

Changes to predications were largely due to adjustments to pay costs. Savings had been made as a result of the continued vacancy for the Head of Science position, and the late recruitment to the Head of Additional Learning Support post. In addition, a significant number of staff had left in June and July (after the budget had been set) as temporary contracts came to an end. Some additional income from maternity leave insurance was still to be added to the budget. Recharges to Fylde Coast Teaching School and FCAT were included in the accounts.

In response to a question about non pay HR costs which were overspent by £49k, the Head of Finance and HR explained that these were largely costs incurred during the recruitment of the new Principal. HR costs, generally, were overspent as there had been much more recruitment activity than expected.

Governors thanked the Head of Finance and HR for her report.

71.2014 D1 Resolved: to accept the report from the Head of Finance and HR on the Year End Accounts.

Dr R Murphy gave her apologies and left the meeting.

72.2014 Professional Standards Payment (PSP)

The Head of Finance and HR provided a report on professional standards payments for teaching staff (Paper 13.1).

Governors were informed that the College's current rules on PSP are currently stricter than those applied by the Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA). The SFCA was expected to publish new guidelines imminently, but again, it was unlikely that these would be as robust as the College's own. Governors were asked to approve the College to continue its independent stance on PSP whilst monitoring any changes to SFCA guidelines.

The Chair emphasised the need for the College to be able to maintain its ability to negotiate with staff and deal with issues in its own way rather than be influenced by other institutions that did not have the same issues.

Challenge

In response to a question from governors, the Head of Finance and HR confirmed that College staff were aware of PSP criteria.

Following a brief discussion on the matter, governors agreed that the College should maintain its own independent policy on PSP whilst always being aware and mindful of SFCA guidelines.

71.2014 D1 Resolved: to accept the report from the Head of Finance and HR on PSP.

71.2014 D2 Resolved: to maintain the current College independent policy on PSP whilst always being aware and mindful of SFCA guidelines.

73.2014 Register of Interests

The Clerk agreed to forward blank register of interest forms for governors to complete and return either electronically or through the post. This is an annual requirement for the Corporation.

KB
All
Governors

74.2014 Any other business

The Director of Learning informed Governors that the College had achieved the Dyslexia Friendly Kitemark.

Governors asked for thanks and congratulations to be passed onto staff.

75.2014	<p>Estimation of new risk areas identified during the meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor performance in some subject areas mentioned in the Deputy Principal's report on summer examination results. • Failure to complete Phase 5 of the Accommodation Strategy within budget and/or on time. • Failure to recruit to the Head of Science position.
76.2014	<p>Date and time of next meeting Tuesday 9th December at 1715hrs.</p>

Signed: _____

Chair: _____

Date: _____