

Present: Sean Devlin (Chair), Ed Senior (Principal), Sheila Boniface, Sarah Turner, Sheena Payne-Lunn, Cathy Scott-Burt, Alex Gwinn and Emily Furniss.

In Attendance: Ruth Scotson (Deputy Principal), Jo Payne (PA to the Principal/Clerk to the Local Governing Body)

1. Appointment of Chair: Sean Devlin was unanimously appointed as Chair for the remainder of the academic year.

2. Apologies: Kat Bashar and Isabel Swift.

3. Standing Items

- (i) Sheila Boniface declared that she was a Trustee of Heart of Mercia Multi-Academy Trust.
- (ii) Those items referring to individual members of staff or students were identified as confidential.
- (iii) No urgent business was identified.

4. Minutes

- (i) Minutes of the Quality Committee: 14th November 2019

The minutes of the Quality Committee meeting were **confirmed** as an accurate record. An update was received on the action points arising from the minutes.

The Principal reported that he had met with the Duke of Edinburgh Co-ordinator to discuss provision and that the Bronze Award would be offered next year. In response to questions he advised that it was possible to undertake the Gold Award without having achieved Silver and that the Silver had not been hugely popular. The Committee were also informed that D of E would also become more expensive as the College would have to run it directly.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and were pleased that the Bronze Award would be reintroduced alongside continuation of the Gold Award.

5. Governance

The Clerk presented her report and outlined the following points:

- Sean Devlin had expressed an interest in the role of Vice-Chair and it was proposed that his appointment be recommended to the Local Governing Body;
- This meeting was the last for Emily Furniss and provided an opportunity to thank her for her contributions;
- Academisation had been such an important and time-consuming task for governors that training had been overshadowed. A 'preparing for inspection' questionnaire had been circulated to governors for completion and it was hoped this would identify areas where governors had gaps in their training. A draft training programme would be prepared for the forthcoming meeting of the Local Governing Body;
- The new Ofsted Common Inspection Framework would need to be a focus and the Quality Manager would present to the Local Governing Body on 10th July;
- The committee's terms of reference aimed to ensure that all those within the terms of reference for the Trust's Curriculum and Quality Committee were covered whilst also ensuring other aspects of the former Quality Committee, e.g. search and governance, were included;

- It seemed sensible for the cycles of business of the Local Governing Bodies of both academies within the Trust to have commonality so that, for example, Trustees would consider both annual safeguarding reports at the same meeting when they might currently be reported at different times. The Clerk would continue to liaise with the Clerk to the MAT to streamline Board and Committee business as much as possible;
- The schedule of meetings has been arranged to allow time for minutes to be prepared ahead of publication of agenda papers for the Trust Board. The Clerk to the MAT was in agreement with the suggestion that two committee dates at the very start of the academic year were too early to be productive or report in any detail. It was, therefore, proposed that timing of Committee meetings reflect the same pattern as previous years with three in total.

In response to questions the Clerk confirmed that all aspects of the previous terms of reference were included in those proposed and that nothing additional was essentially added and only cross-referenced against those of the Board's Committee.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and commented on the lack of ethnic diversity on the Board. The Committee agreed to **recommend**:

- The appointment of Sean Devlin as Vice-Chair of the Local Governing Body for the remainder of the academic year;
- The committee terms of reference for approval.

6. Strategic Issues, Quality Assurance & Curriculum

(i) Strategic Issues

Admissions Target

The Principal advised that it had previously been the case that a minimum and maximum were recommended as an admissions target, however, he suggested it would be more sensible to consider the strategies employed to increase student numbers rather than focus on a range. The number of places offered to applicants were currently 21 more than the same point last year, however the current number in the first year was smaller than previous cohorts which would have an impact on the rollover into the second year. Based on this it was a realistic target for the student body to be the same size as this year, 1347, and the College was planning for growth in subsequent years based on improved demographics and efforts with the Growth Strategy.

The Principal reported that the Growth Strategy had been developed in an attempt to consider marketing and recruitment more strategically and the following points were outlined:

- There had been significant focus on the Ambition Programme and HE+ aimed at those students with high prior attainment. Whilst the College remained unselective it was important to promote aspirational aims. The Principal added that after a 20% decline in university applications last year, the number of applications this year had returned to the previous level which was positive;
- New subjects would be offered for next year and included Criminology, Environmental Science and Engineering;
- The approach with Level 2 students was to enrol them on a three-year programme with clear internal progression identified;
- The roles in the marketing team had been clarified with a Marketing Co-ordinator appointed;
- Advertising was being targeted to respond to local issues e.g. subjects being withdrawn at other school sixth forms;
- A new bus extension service would be introduced and applicants from Lacon Childe informed about this. In addition a taxi service would operate from Shrub Hill station to assist those travelling by train.

The Committee concluded that they did want a target student number to be presented, but did not need a maximum and minimum number to be set. Governors welcomed the Growth Strategy and the opportunity to provide challenge and support in relation to progress against the aims identified and strategies used. The success of the College's Young Enterprise team in reaching the National Finals was noted and governors' were impressed by the focus of the team's product in promoting positive mental health in school aged children.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and **agreed to recommend** the target of 1347 to the Local Governing Body for approval.

Admissions and Fitness to Study Policy

The Principal outlined the proposed changes to the policy which included:

- Clarification of arrangements for enrolling home educated students;
- The inclusion of mental health in addition to physical illness in the Fitness to Study aspect of the policy.

In response to questions, the Principal and Deputy Principal advised that:

- A number of years ago the College was approached by the ESFA and encouraged to enrol home educated students, however, as a 16-19 academy it was possible that an application to change the age range would need to be submitted to enable the College to continue to admit students who are aged under 16. The ESFA were still investigating what process needed to be followed;
- The appendix to the policy on the admission of students aged 14 or 15 was intended to distinguish between those who were genuinely home educated and those who had been excluded and were not in education;
- Whilst the College would not refuse to offer a place to someone who had previously been excluded from school, additional follow up would be required to ensure that reassurances about appropriate behaviour and safety were adequate.

The Principal circulated a proposed procedure for an appeal hearing against the refusal or withdrawal of an offer of a place and proposed its inclusion as an appendix to the policy. It was noted that reference to making a complaint to the ESFA was not a further stage of appeal and any decision would not be overturned. The ESFA's role was to ensure that College policies and procedures had been correctly followed.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and **approved** changes to the policy as proposed including inclusion of the appeal hearing procedure.

Draft Mission Statement and Strategic Aims

The Principal proposed that no changes were proposed to the Mission Statement and Strategic Aims at present. As the current focus was on establishing a permanent management structure the Principal wanted to involve the new senior leadership team in discussions around the mission and strategic aims and would present proposed changes to a future meeting if required.

The Committee **agreed to recommend** approval of the Mission Statement and Strategic Aims without change.

(ii) Quality Assurance

The Deputy Principal presented her report and highlighted the following:

- An action plan had been produced to record progress against the recommendations from the Quality Visit report. Some examples included the focus on teaching and learning and linearisation at the recent training day, consideration of a partition for the silent study space and directional signage;
- A consultation on the timetable had been led by Graham Williams and a summary of findings was considered. Some of the models included a move from 3 to 4 lessons per week and shorter lessons. In conclusion there was no consensus and staff acknowledged that the existing model did have some merits;
- Ongoing support had been offered in subjects identified for a Quality Improvement Review and considerable progress had been made in the majority of areas. The principles outlined for next year aimed to use resources to best target areas of underperformance from an early point in the year;

- Lesson observations would focus on subjects where outcomes were requiring improvement and other areas would be subject to learning walks rather than formal observation;
- Cross-College questionnaires were very positive although the response rate was disappointing. Particular mention was made of the Cafeteria who had an excellent rating of 55%. Governors commented on the positive responses in relation to inclusivity and safety.

In response to questions from governors, the Principal and Deputy Principal advised that:

- There would be some benefits to use of a blocking grid in that staff would have a better idea before the summer break about their timetable for the next academic year. Currently there can be significant change as a result of Course Confirmation and staff had been extremely flexible in accommodating changes;
- The main concern of staff was workload and it was not felt that a move to a six block timetable model would reduce workload as there would be shorter amounts of free time in which to do some work when out of the classroom;
- The lesson observation form introduced this year would continue to be used with the focus on targets being retained, however, it was not feasible to sustain this approach across all staff hence the decision to focus on areas of underperformance;
- The gender balance for the College was not reflected in the responses to the Cross-College questionnaire. Whilst there are more females than males it was not to the degree suggested in the responses.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and were pleased at the breadth of support that would be offered to subjects as part of the Quality Improvement Review.

(iii) Quality and Development Plan

The Principal advised that the Quality and Development Plan had been updated and advised that:

- He was confident of improvements in almost all areas where results were requiring improvement last year;
- Biology remained an area for concern due to issues with staff illness leading to difficulty in adequately covering absence with suitable teachers. The Principal was pleased that by word of mouth a suitable teacher was identified and she had indicated that she would be pleased to return next year. It was made clear that resource would be put in to support students with any consequences caused by the lack of continuity;
- The University of Birmingham were piloting a scheme for students interested in STEM from particular postcodes. It would mean that these students would receive lower offers to enrol on a Foundation year during which the university would pay tuition fees and accommodation;
- Governors should be aware that the extent of audits in relation to GDPR had not been completed as initially planned due partly to the development of the new MIS system. Whilst governors should continue to challenge in this area, the Principal reassured governors that it was likely that a MAT DPO would be appointed and peer audits would take place across both institutions in the MAT. The Finance Director suggested this as a focus of internal audit.

One of the parent governors outlined her experience as her son was in his first year of Biology at the College. She emphasised the need to ensure that parents were reassured about the additional support that would be offered. The Principal responded to say that the Head of Department would write to parents to ensure these reassurance had been given.

The Committee **noted** the Quality and Development Plan and the update provided.

(iv) Curriculum

The Principal presented his report and highlighted the following:

- Retention of students in College was approximately 0.5% higher than the equivalent point last year and as students were on two year programmes it was hoped that a higher proportion would be retained into the second year;
- Discussions were taking place with Heads of Department about curriculum offering in subjects with small numbers.
- Public Services would not be offered at Level 2 as there would not be the progression route onto Level 3 given its imminent withdrawal. Business Level 2 would be offered as an alternative;
- A decision about Textiles had been deferred until September, but it would not be published in the prospectus for the following year's admission;
- Access to Higher Education had been a hugely successful course and offered students a route back into university, however, applications were very low which might be partly attributed to the removal of the bursary for nursing;
- It was proposed to teach Core Maths over one rather than two years, but potential adoption leave might mean that this was not possible.

The Committee **noted** the information provided. There was some concern expressed about the possible future withdrawal of Spanish and Music and the potential risk to recruitment of reducing curriculum offering although governors clearly understood the financial reasons for ongoing review.

7. Student Council

- (i) The Clerk and Student Governor spoke to the annual report and commented that the Council had been very effective. The following points were made:
- The Council was relaunched as attendance and involvement had been poor. This was relatively successful although tutor representatives were not good at attending meetings;
 - Graham Williams, Jenny Jones and Lin Bingley had worked hard to instil structure and to assign roles to those on the Council;
 - Impressive fundraising had taken place for a number of charities and a community litter pick was planned for Green for Grenfell;
 - The Council had been involved in activities for Mental Health Awareness week which was led by Julie Ferman.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and commended the Council on their achievements.

8. Closing Standing Items

(i) Risk Management:

The Principal outlined the highlighted changes to the Risk Register and Assurance Map and the impact this had, if any, on the scoring of the risk. The following points were raised in relation to the revised Risk Register:

- The Finance Manager had not been replaced and the College was utilising the benefits of the MAT arrangement with support from the Trust Finance Director. In response to a question the Principal noted that a service level agreement had not yet been prepared in terms of this arrangement;
- Progress with the MIS development was going well and the level of organisation of the HSFC developers was impressive. Training for staff was scheduled for 9th July with individual sections for tutors etc. HSFC staff would be available in September to support staff.

The Committee **noted** the revisions to the Risk Register.

- (ii) Impact: The Committee considered that all aspects of the discussions were aimed at ensuring excellent provision for students. The contribution of the Parent Governor in relation to concerns about Biology teaching enabled the Principal to respond directly and offer reassurances.
- (iii) Any Urgent Business: No items were raised.

(iv) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 6th November 2019 (subject to approval by the Local Governing Body).

The meeting finished at 7.10pm.

Signed:.....
Sean Devlin (Chair)

Date:.....

CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 12th JUNE 2019

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
C&Q/12.06.19/5	Produce draft governors' training programme for 2019-20.	JJP	10.07.19	
C&Q/12.06.19/6(iii)	Ensure a letter is sent to parents to offer reassurances in respect of Biology.	EYS	ASAP	

ACTION POINTS CARRIED FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
QC/13.03.19/5	Share details of National Governance Association Learning Link with governors.	JJP	March 2019	✓
QC/13.06.18/4(iv)	Consideration to be given to alternative means of enabling students to complete silver Duke of Edinburgh award.	EYS*	July 2019*	✓