

Governors Present: Gill Slater
Kat Bashar
Sheila Boniface (*arrived at 6.40pm*)
Paul Cumming
Sean Devlin
Phil Douce
Alex Gwinn

Toby Hooper
Cathy Scott-Burt
Ed Senior
Abi Stephenson
Isabel Swift
Sarah Turner (*arrived at 5.45pm*)
Cherry Yau

In Attendance: Ruth Scotson (Deputy Principal)
Jo Payne (Clerk to the Local Governing Body)
Matt Hall (Senior Leader for Subject Improvement & Head of Department)

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

The need for those who were also on the Trust Board to decide during the course of the academic year whether they remained on the Local Governing Body or remain only as a Trustee. A transitional period was acceptable whilst suitable replacements for those stepping down were identified.

Gill Slater was unanimously **appointed** as Chair for the academic year and Sean Devlin unanimously **appointed** as Vice-Chair.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Matthew Adams, Angela Davis, Sam Lifford and Sheena Payne-Lunn.

3. Opening Standing Items

- (i) Gill Slater, Sheila Boniface, Phil Douce and Toby Hooper declared that they were also Trustees on the MAT Board.
- (ii) Those parts of the agenda, which referred to individual students or members of staff were identified as confidential to the Local Governing Body.
- (iii) No items were identified as urgent.

4. Quality

(i) Examination results and success rate updates

The Deputy Principal referred to the headline success rates and high grades by qualification. It was noted that the AS data was not comparable to previous years due to the very small number of entries.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the information provided.

(ii) Presentation

The Deputy Principal and Senior Leader for Subject Improvement provided an overview of subject performance and identified strategies for improvement. The following points were made:

- Pass rates and the A*-C rate were good and well above national averages. Retention was also positive.
- Value added scores were not where the College would want them to be and was due to a more able cohort with higher target grades. Whilst the percentage achieving A*/A grades had increased the A*-B percentage had not improved to the required level. The two systems that provide value added scores (ALPs and Six Dimensions) were explained;
- The current year 2 cohort would be the first not to sit AS exams so the College approach to linearization and revisiting themes and topics was a priority;
- There were notable successes including one student who achieved 4 A* grades and the highest possible grades in all of the STEP papers required to take up a place at the University of Cambridge;
- High grades on English and Maths GCSE resits were very good;
- The Principal and Deputy Principal were currently meeting with Heads of Departments and Subject Leaders;
- During the summer term, departments were revising schemes of work to ensure that linear delivery was addressed. The approach to Core Support would also be more directive. Consideration was also given to ensuring an ambitious curriculum and motivating students to aim for the highest grades. In addition, mindset strategies were continuing to be pushed as part of the tutorial programme.
- A new approach to subject improvement was being introduced this academic year aimed at being positive and supportive, but also offering challenge where required. Early intervention would involve meetings with Senior Leaders and staff were expected to take greater ownership of their results. The support was not intended to only bring about remedial action but to ensure sustained improvement;
- The Common Inspection Framework references the duty to focus on improving staff knowledge and it was hoped staff would buy in to the new approach whilst Senior Leaders remained mindful of staff workload.

Governors **thanked** the Deputy Principal and Senior Leader for Subject Improvement for their clear and informative presentation and **noted** the new approach to bring about subject improvement where necessary. There was some comment about the language used to ensure staff buy in, but also the need to separate this process from capability and follow the procedure for this where capability issues were identified. The Chair encouraged governors to continue to support staff through participation in link visits and other opportunities that arose.

5. **Minutes**

10th July 2019

The minutes of the meeting were **agreed** as an accurate record and the action points updated.

6. **Stakeholder Voice**

- Phil Douce reported that he had met with the Head of Computing & IT with a view to College students developing a website for the Worcester Civic Society.
- Sean Devlin would arrange to visit a school in Uganda (on a trip he already has planned) as it is one that the Student Council were keen to support.

7. Finance and Resources

(i) Finance

The Principal referred to the Finance Director's report outlining the current external context and developments. He advised that the Finance Director was unable to attend this meeting but would be at the Finance and Resources Committee meeting in November.

The Chair addressed the Local Governing Body and advised that she was aware that Governors had concerns about the level of detail and reporting being insufficient to enable them to satisfactorily monitor performance against budget, and that these concerns had been expressed at the previous meeting. She said that in response to these concerns the Executive Principal and Finance Director had offered to meet with a group of governors to clarify the levels of delegation and authority of the Local Governing Body and to enable governors to perform their financial function.

Governors were concerned that as part of an inspection Ofsted make judgements on governance and governors ability to demonstrate they were fulfilling their responsibilities was crucial. Governors questioned whether they were receiving the same level of detail as their colleagues on the Hereford SFC LGB. Governors acknowledged that teething problems were inevitable in the early stages of collaborating with MAT partners. They welcomed the opportunity to meet with the MAT CEO and Finance Director in order to clarify charges made by the MAT for services provided, what level of service would be provided in return for this charge, as well as consideration given to whether service level agreements were required.

The Principal acknowledged governors' frustrations at their lack of financial information and clarity regarding their role. He commented that he had expressed similar concerns which had been addressed in principle by the agreement that the MAT Finance Director would attend WSFC to give financial advice 1 day every two weeks (although as yet this had not occurred). He noted however the significant levels of support provided by the MAT in relation to IT (without which the start of term would have been adversely affected), as well as Quality and Marketing. He was also aware that the MAT Finance Director had been very busy with MAT audits as well as end of year accounts at both HSFC and WSFC.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- The teachers' pension scheme costs would be supported by the government for this year, but there was a potential gap in funding should this support not continue. LGPS (support staff pension) was funded very differently;
- The Clerk to the MAT had undertaken research on the impact of MATs;

(ii) Property Strategy

The Principal presented his report with suggested amendments to the Property Strategy and invited feedback from Governors. He reported that:

- The revised strategy aligns with the College's short and medium term priorities as detailed in the MAT's Accommodation Strategy;
- The strategy is shorter and the priorities identified were more realistic.

In response to questions the Principal reported that whilst the site security measures were a significant improvement in terms of securing the building, a perimeter fence would secure access to the site. Consultants who assist educational establishments with Condition Improvement Fund bids suggested that it would be worthwhile submitting a bid for a fence given that it would safeguard the site.

The Local Governing Body **approved** the College Property Strategy as amended. Governors were extremely complimentary about the new foyer décor and internal signage.

8. Assurance

(i) Risk Register and Assurance Map

The Principal explained that any changes had been highlighted and that all updates would be referred to in the Principal's report.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the updates to the risk register.

9. Strategy and Governance

(i) Principal's Report

The Principal presented the Local Governing Body with his report and emphasised the following points:

- First year enrolments were positive, which when combined with a smaller second year, meant that it was reasonable to think that the overall student number would be maintained this year which was the number used in the financial forecast. Country demographics were positive and there was no reason why students numbers should not increase in subsequent years;
- Recruitment on evenings classes and Access to HE had declined and numbers were small. Similarly, only a small number of adults enrol on daytime programme each year. The Principal recommended that adult provision be withdrawn in an orderly way prior to advertising for next year's courses;
- It had been announced that the Government would increase the base rate funding per student from £4000 to £4188. The impact of this funding increase would be approximately £250,000, and there was also a suggestion that the Government would fund the pension increase for a further year;
- In the past the College has had around 10 EU students each year that enrol at College for one year and were funded in the same way as our students, however, it was questionable whether this should continue given the move away from AS levels;
- A member of staff with responsibility for International Students would attend an international fair in Poland with a view to promoting one or two term cultural experiences. The students would not be included in the ILR and would make a donation;
- When the College became an academy it was given £25,000 by the DfE for the purpose of a Government part-funded pay rise for teachers. As the pay rise had already been agreed by the joint negotiations the additional amount is approximately 0.5% for teaching staff for the months from April to August. The Principal's recommended that the Local Governing Body award a one-off non-consolidated payment to teaching staff to cover this amount;
- Hereford Sixth Form College staff had been extremely supportive in transitioning to the new MIS system and College staff had also worked tremendously hard.

In response to questions the Principal advised that:

- It was not a requirement for adult students in classes with 16-18 year olds to have a DBS, although they could not be timetabled in the same class as a student under the age of 16. This had been checked with the SFCA who confirmed that DBS was not required as the adult student was not involved in regulated activity;
- There was a local provider who offer the Access to HE course and an evening class programme, however, the other local provider did not offer A Levels;
- If evening class provision were to be removed, this would include GCSE Maths and English;
- Whilst the government allocation was only intended to cover the teaching staff pay rise, it would be desirable to extend this to support staff if affordable.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the information provided and made the following comments:

- The Access to HE provided social mobility and was a contributor to those out of education being able to progress to degree level qualifications;
- There was some concern that adult students were not required to have a DBS check but were satisfied that this was the advice given and understood the reasons for this.

The following actions were agreed:

- The Principal would consult with those staff responsible for adult education at the College and agreed to share numbers on each type of provision over recent years. A decision would be made by the Local Governing Body at its November meeting as to whether to continue with any adult education provision.
- The Local Governing Body **approved** a one-off 0.5% pay award (April to August) for teaching staff and, only if affordable, for support staff.

(ii) Marketing Annual Report and Review

The Clerk presented the inaugural annual marketing report in her role as Marketing Co-ordinator and highlighted the following:

- She would meet each half-term with the HSFC Assistant Principal/Director of Studies who oversees Admissions and Marketing. The first meeting of the academic year had taken place and was very positive;
- The extension bus service linking Cleobury Mortimer to Clows Top was now in operation and 12 students were accessing the service. The number of students who enrolled from Lacon Childe had increased from 5 to 15. Two taxis to and from Shrub Hill station were also in operation;
- Attendance at Open Events in 2018-19 was better than the previous year. Eventbrite had been used and would be further utilised this academic year with questions added to the registration form including current school;
- Given the significant increase in applications from schools with sixth forms and the traditionally lower conversion rate from these, personalised letters were sent to applicants. Enrolments from these schools generally increased compared to the previous year which might also be attributed to external factors e.g. reducing curriculum offering at these institutions;
- Social media campaigns had continued and responses to comments (positive and negative) were timely even out of working hours;
- The College had a school/university alumni page which would be better utilised for alumni purposes;
- A Google Ads campaign had been launched and a commitment made to run this throughout the academic year. Initial results of traffic to the website from paid searches was positive.

In response to questions the Clerk advised that a Jisc accessibility report had been undertaken and the recommendations taken into account when designing the website. Alex Gwinn referred to a visually impaired student who had completed some work experience at College and he had taken some time to consider the website and felt that it was user friendly and accessible.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the contents of the report.

(iii) Quality & Development Plan 2018-19

The Principal confirmed that the Quality and Development Plan for 2018-19 had been updated. The Deputy Principal referred to initiatives to promote staff wellbeing and manage workload e.g. revising the format of the TDS scheme.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the contents of the Plan.

(iv) Clerk's Update Report

The Clerk presented the update report noting the following:

- At the July MAT Board meeting, it was agreed to delegate the power to appoint governors to individual colleges;
- A letter had been issued to Chairs of governing bodies directing them to a report in relation to a college investigated for financial irregularity. The letter reminded governors of their need to be aware and scrutinise expenditure;
- Responses to the 'inspection ready' questionnaire were positive and governors were clear about the key challenges facing the College, what was being done to meet these challenges and the College's key strengths and weaknesses. It was pleasing that governors felt confident in challenging and acting as a 'critical friend' to senior management and felt that working relationship with the Principal and SLT were trusting and transparent with mutual respect;
- Governor training had been somewhat hampered by academisation, but a full training programme was in place for this academic year and the Clerk had directed governors to some external training available locally;
- The new Common Inspection Framework requires a governor to be appointed as the designated link governor for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The Clerk invited expressions of interest and advised that Chair's action might be used to make this appointment at the earliest possible time;
- To enable the College to continue to enrol a small number of students aged 15 who had been electively home educated, a business case and consultation were completed and fast-tracked with a positive outcome. A deed of variation was required to formalise this change. It was noted that the number of under 16 year olds that could be enrolled was restricted to 10 and this was a stipulation suggested by the College.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the contents of the update.

10. **Policy Reviews**

Student Council Constitution and Code of Practice

The Local Governing Body **approved** the policy with the proposed minor amendments.

Governors Handbook 2019-20

The Local Governing Body **approved** the Governors' Handbook with the amendments as outlined by the Clerk.

Quality Assurance Policy

The Local Governing Body **approved** the Quality Assurance policy with the proposed changes and **noted** the inclusion of the subject improvement guidelines.

Freedom of Speech Policy

The Local Governing Body **approved** the Freedom of Speech policy with the proposed minor amendments.

11. **Closing Standing Items**

- (i) Chair's Action: No actions to report.
- (ii) Health and Safety: No items were raised.

- (iii) Risk Management: Governors' consideration of their responsibility in terms of overseeing the College finances and working with the MAT were noted.
- (iv) Impact: Challenge in relation finances exhibited that governors take their role in managing and overseeing the finance and resource of the College to ensure funds are spent in the best interests of the students.
- (v) Any Urgent Business: No items were raised.
- (vi) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 27th November 2019 at 5.30pm.

The meeting closed at 7.43 p.m.

Signed:
Gill Slater (Chair)

Date:

LGB ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 18TH SEPTEMBER 2019

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/18.09.19/7(i)	Volunteer governors to meet with Executive Principal and Finance Director with the Clerk to co-ordinate a mutually convenient time.	JJP	ASAP	
LGB/18.09.19/9(i)	Consult with staff who have responsibility for adult education and provide data on numbers on this provision in the current and recent years.	EYS	November 2019	

ACTION POINTS BROUGHT FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/10.07.19/1	Circulate Inspection Framework presentation.	JJP	ASAP	✓

* Denotes amended action point.