

Present: Kat Bashar, Sheila Boniface, Sean Devlin, Sheena Payne-Lunn, Cathy Scott-Burt, Ed Senior, and Sarah Turner.

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 Chair for the academic year.

2. Apologies: None.

3. Standing Items

- (i) Sheila Boniface declared her role as a Trustee of the Heart of Mercia 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 Curriculum & Quality Committee: 12th June 2019

The minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting were **confirmed** as a correct record. An update was received on the action points arising from the minutes.

In response to questions about the discussions at the last meeting it was reported that:

- The temporary Biology appointment referred to last time did stay at College and another temporary teacher returned this year. The teacher who was on maternity leave has now returned. There was confidence that staffing was stable this academic year;
- Spanish A Level was still part of the curriculum with no current plan to withdraw it. Outcomes in the summer were outstanding;
- Similarly Music A Level was still on offer. Outcomes were good although numbers remain small. It was commented that the change to the arts curriculum in schools had adversely effected recruitment on subjects such as Music.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

5. Quality Assurance

- (i) Principal's Update

The Principal presented his report highlighting the following:

- The College was likely to meet its target student number. Due to the new MIS system, it was not yet possible to confirm the number or do the checks that would normally be done at this time of year as yet. It was also noted that not all student had yet to reach the six week point to qualify for funding. The current number was a positive step and indicated strong recruitment given that the second year cohort was smaller;
- The ESFA funding allocations for post-16 institutions in Worcestershire based on last year's student numbers indicated that although student numbers were disappointing last year, this was not a reflection of the College's marketing, but indicative of the reduced demographic. The College's share of the demographic increased from 17.1% to 17.4%;
- The demographic was due to increase in size and although not significantly in partner schools this academic year, these schools begin to experience growth in subsequent years;

- Public Services Level 3 had been given a reprieve in the form of Uniformed Protective Services and would continue to be offered for the next year or two. The course was a two block option and students would be encouraged to study the applied Criminology alongside this. It was noted that the UPS qualification was not yet government approved and would not appear in the league tables, however, there was a risk that approximately 20 students might not choose to come to College without this offering;
- The decision to remove English Language and Literature A Level had been taken but the other two English A Levels would remain. Consideration would be given to introducing an enrichment offering focused on creative writing which was a positive feature of the withdrawn course;
- Discussions had taken place with the Access to HE Co-ordinator, Adult Education Co-ordinator and the administrator who oversees these areas. The Principal was still of the view that all adult education courses should be withdrawn from the College's provision from next year – this area was no longer proving cost effect and a significant resource had been put in to address poor retention on Maths and English GCSE courses;

In response to questions the Clerk, in her capacity as Marketing Co-ordinator, advised that, if anything, more money had been spent on promoting the Access and evening class courses in recent years with social media campaigns being used. The Heart of Worcestershire College had a large Access provision and also offered a wide range of other courses.

The Committee noted the information provided in relation to student numbers and the curriculum offering. It was **agreed to recommend** the withdrawal of adult education provision from next academic year to the Local Governing Body.

(ii) Quality Assurance

The Chair invited the Deputy Principal to present her report and she highlighted the following:

- Achievement (formerly success) and retention rates were good, although based on the prior attainment of the cohort, there were not enough high grades (A*-B) which had impacted on the value added scores. The College's ALPS score was 5 compared to 4 last year meaning that students were making expected progress but to a lesser degree;
- Where subjects were graded as requiring improvement or inadequate last year, updates had been provided on how these subjects performed in the summer results. Where there had not been improvement, the subjects were part of the subject improvement review scheme. There had been significant improvement in some areas;
- Whilst female students had better grades per completer than males, male student performed better in value added terms. The achievement rates of students aged 19+ were pleasing and had improved after being identified as an area of underperformance last year;
- The College needed to focus on those students classed as being economically disadvantaged;
- Subjects were updating Quality Improvement Reviews to include reference to areas of underperformance and moderation would take place on 7th November, the outcomes of which would feed into the College Self-Assessment Report which would be presented to the Local Governing Body at the end of the month for consideration and approval.

The Committee scrutinised the details within the report and in response to questions the Deputy Principal advised that:

- There was not a whole College approach to improving the attainment of female students, but individual departments were tasked with identifying strategies where this was an issue in a subject in the department;
- There was no national comparator for attendance as institutions tend to measure this in different ways. Ofsted would make a judgement on attendance and it was suggested that attendance levels below 90% would be challenged;

- Quality Improvement discussions were ongoing with each member of the Quality team focusing on two or three subjects. Members of the Senior Leadership Team would be speaking to students in these subject areas to find out if the strategies identified by subject staff to bring about improvement were being actioned and having an impact. An update would be presented to the Local Governing Body;
- Staff involved in Quality Improvement Reviews had been co-operative and reasonably positive about the process. Some were upset at their own results, but the Senior Leadership Team were approaching the process in such a way so as to offer support by way of additional resources or staff development;
- The focus of lesson observations would be on subject areas involved in Quality Improvement Reviews rather than across the board. It was agreed that there is a point at which challenge rather than support was required. It was held that discussions directly with the subject leaders and teachers rather than mediating through a Head of Department was a positive thing.

The Committee **noted** the information provided. The Student Governor reported that there was inconsistent homework in her subject areas with less being given in Law than others. She also felt it would be advantageous for more tests to be given to assist with revisiting first year work. The Principal thanked the Student Governor for this feedback and advised that subjects were expected to set some form of homework after each lesson so this would be followed up.

(iii) Quality and Development Plan

The Committee considered the updated Quality and Development Plan for 2019-20. The Deputy Principal advised that the Quality Assurance aspects were drafted by the Senior Leader for Quality Assurance and the Finance and Management sections by the Principal. It was noted that the figure in relation to progression to university was incorrect and that 68.6% had progressed to university with 6.3% taking a gap year.

The Committee challenged what the College currently does to follow up on those who have expressed an interest in university but take a gap year without having applied through UCAS. The Deputy Principal reported that the College did offer support to former students on making applications to university, but it was agreed that perhaps more could be done to maintain contact with these students to find out if they do go on to university and to offer support where possible.

In response to questions, the Principal reported that:

- The new MIS system was operational with information on students available. He thanked the Senior Leader for Student Wellbeing who had worked extremely hard to ensure that safeguarding and medical details were available for staff to view;
- Some data checks had been delayed due to the new MIS system being installed;
- The issues encountered this year were for this year only and due to the fact that students applied on the old MIS system and then being migrated onto the new system;
- An individual had been identified to possibly work on a consultancy basis for a short period to relieve capacity issues. Even with an off the shelf solution as opposed to HSFC's bespoke system there would still have been issues due to the College's ability to replace developers as they left.

The Committee noted their concern about the current issues with reporting from the new MIS system but were reassured by the Principal that HSFC had other staff who could offer support with the bespoke system and noted the significant support that HSFC IT staff had given to the College.

The Deputy Principal referred to the section on reducing staff workload in the Quality and Development Plan and the measures which had already been taken or considered. A survey had been issued to all staff in relation to workload.

The Committee asked whether progress had been made with financial information being prepared. The Clerk advised that two members of the Finance and Resources had met with the Trust's Executive Principal and Finance Director and the level of reporting shared at this meeting and that governors would receive going forward was sufficient. The Principal added that he had recently met with the Executive Principal and Finance Director to talk through budget assumptions and this had been helpful. He added that the additional funding of £188 per student had now been confirmed. A MAT level finance appointment would be made but the appointed person would be based at the College providing day to day management of the finance team.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and commented that it was good to see mindset strategies and initiatives coming out in the Quality and Development Plan.

6. Governance

The Clerk presented her report on the performance of Governors during the 2018-19 academic year and noted that:

- Attendance was disappointing at 75.4% against the sector benchmark of 81.4%. The Clerk suggested that perhaps individual instances of poor attendance needed to be challenged although she was mindful that governors were volunteers giving freely of their time;
- The number of link visits had been below target for the first time in a number of years and encouraged governors to arrange a visit;
- The training programme would be amended to reflect the request of the Trust that all governors attend training further to the recent SFCA Inspection Conference. The Deputy Principal would present to governors immediately before the forthcoming Local Governing Body meeting;
- Sheena Payne-Lunn's term of office as Parent Governor would end in December. Sheena had expressed an interest in an external governor role and there was a position;
- Two nominations for student governor position had been received and an electronic election would take place in the week commencing 18th November;
- No nominations had yet been received for the parent governor vacancy that arises from the end of Sheena's current term of office.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and the proposal to **recommend** the following targets for 2019-20:

	Criteria	Target 2019-20
1	Governor attendance at LGB & C'ttee meetings	80% attendance
2	Governor attendance at training sessions	80% attendance
3	Number of papers tabled at meetings	5% of papers at meetings
4	Number of planned policy reviews completed	90% of reviews carried out
5	Duration of (i) Local Governing Body meetings (ii) Committee meetings	90% 3 hours long or less 90% 2 hours long or less
6	Governor replies to self-assessment questionnaires	90% replied
7	Link Governor visits	11 per annum
8	Scrutiny of Subject Quality Improvement Plans	4 per annum

Further to consideration the Committee agreed to:

- **recommend** the appointment of Sheena Payne-Lunn as an external governor and member of the Curriculum & Quality Committee for a four year term;
- **recommend** the appointment of a student governor as elected by the student body;
- **recommend** the appointment of a parent governor as elected by the parent body.

7. Policy Reviews

(i) ILT Strategy Policy

The ILT Strategy Policy was **approved** with the minor amendments proposed.

(ii) Curriculum and Programmes of Study Policy

The Principal noted a change in the condition of funding for Maths and English which meant that those who achieve a grade 2 and then pass the functional skills qualification no longer need to retake the GCSE qualification and the policy has been updated to reflect this.

The Curriculum and Programmes of Study Policy was **approved** with the minor amendments proposed.

(iii) Student Conduct Policy

The Student Conduct Policy was **approved** with the minor amendments proposed.

8. Closing Standing Items

(i) Risk Management:

The Principal presented the updated Risk Register and Assurance Map and highlighted the following:

- He had been really grateful to the invaluable support of HSFC IT Support staff when there had been network issues;
- The bus from Clows Top to Cleobury Mortimer had been well received and two taxis were bringing students to College from Shrub Hill train station;
- There was the possibility of a science premium of £400 per student if they studied two or more out of a range of subjects. This had not yet been confirmed.

It was queried whether the potential loss of senior staff was a risk or one that could be managed and whether this should be reflected in the risk register.

The Principal advised that Cirencester College's application to join the Heart of Mercia Multi-Academy Trust has been approved subject to due diligence. The Clerk added that a condition of this is that Trustees no longer have a role on the Local Governing Body which has clear implications for the College. The condition had to be met by February 2020 to facilitate April 2020 conversion. The Chair of the Committee advised that from his participation in the governance of another MAT, there was no legal requirement for local governors to not also be Trustees. The risk to the College's governance structure would be added to the risk register.

In relation to a question from the Student Governor, the Principal confirmed that the College's evacuation plan identifies staff to visit certain areas to ensure that all students have left the building. It was confirmed that it was not a requirement to register students on evacuation.

The Committee **noted** the information provided.

- (ii) Impact: The Committee noted that their consideration of student outcomes and focus on subject improvement was important as was concern relating to the new MIS system reporting and the implication on College governance of the decision to approve Cirencester College's application to join the MAT.
- (iii) Any Urgent Business: In light of the decision in respect of trustees and governors, the Chair thanked Sheila Boniface for her expertise and commitment to the Committee and the College should this be her last meeting.
- (iv) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 5th February 2020

The meeting finished at 6.54pm.

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

Date:.....

CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 6th NOVEMBER 2019

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
C&Q/06.11.19/5(iii)	Consider how to maintain contact with students who take a gap year and offer support as required.	EYS/RJS	February 2020	
C&Q/06.11.19/8(i)	Add risk to governance arrangements to the risk register in light of the decision to allow a College to join the MAT and the condition that trustees cannot sit on Local Governing Bodies.	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
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	✓