

Present: Sean Devlin, Rubia Amin, Emma Bridges, Joe Durnall, Alex Gwinn, Sheena Payne-Lunn and Ed Senior.

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

Luke Moseley was welcomed to the meeting.

1. Apologies: Wendy Pickess, Cathy Scott-Burt, Lucy Wilson and Jane Jenkins .

2. Standing Items

- (i) There were no declarations of interest.
- (ii) Those items referring to individual members of staff or students were identified as confidential.
- (iii) No urgent business was identified.

3. Minutes

(i) Minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee: 3rd February 2021

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

4. Strategic Issues

(i) Principal's Update

The Principal presented his report and noted the following:

- The return to College was successful and testing had been a triumph with an impressive team effort and a fantastic response from students with all those eligible participating with the exception of fourteen students;
- There had continued to be a small number of confirmed student COVID cases. Whilst predominately these students were already isolating resulting in no others having to isolate, there were two cases reported on the same day which resulted in forty students being identified as proximity contacts and having to isolate;
- The government guidance on face coverings in schools and colleges had been updated. Students were no longer required to wear face coverings in classrooms or communal areas, however, staff must continue to wear face coverings in communal areas where distance could not be maintained. In reviewing the College's risk assessment, it was decided that students, as well as staff, must continue to wear face coverings in communal areas. This would be reviewed at half-term, after which the number of students attending College would decrease with year 2 and foundation students having completed their studies;
- The College had been shortlisted three times in the national SFCA Awards. Two of these were in the 'COVID and Beyond' category and the third was for Julie Ferman, Senior Leader for Student Wellbeing, in the 'Health and Wellbeing' category;
- Parental feedback continued to be extremely positive. Whilst there were not many themes that emerged as areas for improvement, a response would be provided to address any concerns that were raised;

- If Ofsted were to visit this term, it would likely be in relation to the national focus on responding to claims of sexual harassment. Whilst it was noted that the College was not cited on the 'Everyone's Invited' website, it was important to respond. The tutorial programme had already covered harassment, but the programme was modified so that this was revisited with a focus on sexual harassment. It was noted that there had been several reported incidents affecting the College's students whilst on public transport. In these cases, the students were supported and the Police contacted;
- Applications for September 2021 entry were approximately 300 ahead and 200 more of these had been processed and invited to interview when compared with the equivalent point last year;
- The focus had shifted to keeping warm activities in an attempt to convert applications into enrolments. It was noted that the College would hold two Welcome Events later in the summer term for applicants and their parents. Given that the College's priority throughout the pandemic had been the safety and wellbeing of all members of the College community, even if restrictions were lifted in June as proposed, numbers would be restricted and some safety measures in place to acknowledge that some people would still be anxious about large gatherings;
- Uniformed Protective Services and History GCSE would not be offered next academic year. Music Technology Applied Level 3 would not be offered next year with a view to introducing Music Technology A Level in September 2022.

The Committee **noted** the information provided including the target student number of 1521 and the revised Growth Strategy. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Principal for his excellent communication throughout the pandemic and the support for students that had been provided by the College. The Committee asked that their thanks be passed to staff for all of their efforts this academic year. The Committee was in agreement with the College's cautious approach to holding Welcome Events for applicants.

(ii) COVID Recovery – Monitoring Teaching, Learning and Assessment
The Deputy Principal presented updates to the monitoring report.

In response to questions it was noted that the College had already invested in new servers and the Digital Learning Co-ordinator had been in post throughout the academic year. New firewalls had been installed to improve the security of the network particularly in response to current threats of cyber security breaches and offsite back up was being investigated. There were plans to invest £200,000 in upgrading the College's IT network. The Principal noted that consideration was being given to piloting the issuing of laptops to staff. This was something already in place at Hereford Sixth Form College and this had been successful.

The Clerk reminded the Committee that this document was introduced to ensure that governors could monitor and challenge the effectiveness of the College's response to the pandemic in relation to teaching, learning and assessment. On the assumption that there would be a return to normal delivery next year, it was proposed that there would no longer be a need for this document to be updated and shared. The Committee **noted** the information and **agreed** that there was no longer a need to monitor this report.

5. **Quality Assurance**

Quality Assurance Update

The Deputy Principal presented her report and highlighted the following:

- Monitoring and support of the five subjects identified as requiring subject improvement had continued with the final reports to be finalised at half-term;

- Teaching staff were working extremely hard to prepare for the submission of Teacher Assessed Grades. The College's Centre Policy had been submitted to JCQ and received initial approval. Departments had determined the evidence that would be used in deciding on final grades and the weightings that would be attached to each piece of evidence;
- Year 2 and Foundation students were completing final assessments this week and there would be some blind marking of these assessments to avoid any unconscious bias. Student attendance for assessments had been outstanding;
- Moderation meetings would be held before data was submitted to Six Dimensions to get some feedback on value added. All of this had to happen before the deadline for the submission of teacher assessed grades on 18th June. Subjects had to be mindful of 2017-19 data and if there was grade inflation, there needing to be clear explanations of the reasoning for this and subjects would be challenged if the explanations were not satisfactory;
- Requests for special consideration were being reviewed by the Heads of Year and decisions had been made in respect of six requests for special consideration in relation to the final assessments. In normal circumstances, special consideration would mean that a percentage uplift was added where approved, but this year, it only applied if a student was affected at the time that a particular piece of evidence was completed. If approved, it might be that an alternative assessment was substituted or a piece of evidence discounted from the evidence to be considered when making a holistic judgement.

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

- The middle management training that was planned would focus on people skills and managing difficult conversations. The College had already paid for this in anticipation of running these in 2019-20 but this had not been possible;
- It was not possible for more assessments to be subject to blind marking given the time constraints and logistics of implementing this;
- The precise arrangements for how appeals would be managed had yet to be confirmed although it was known that the College would first need to check data had been entered correctly and, if so, the appeal would then be direct to the exam board;
- It would be disappointing if the improvement in some subjects areas did not result in improved grades although the evidence to justify this needed to be robust;
- Teaching staff had received some training on unconscious bias as part of the process of awarded Teacher Assessed Grades.

The Student Governor was invited to provide feedback on teacher assessed grades. She said that it was stressful and that there was variation between subjects as to how much first year work would be included as evidence. She also asked whether consideration might be given, in future years, to increasing the number of assessments that were subject to blind marking.

The Deputy Principal responded to advise that year 1 work would be weighted lower than other pieces of evidence, however, it was required in varying degrees to ensure that all the assessment criteria was covered in the evidence being used to determine grades. It was agreed that consideration would be given as to whether blind marking could be extended to some future assessments.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and felt confident that the College's approach in relation to Teacher Assessed Grades was clear and robust.

(iii) Quality Improvement Plan

The updated Quality Improvement Plan was **noted**.

6. Governance

The Clerk presented her report and outlined the following points:

- A number of external governors were approaching the end of their first term of office. All three had confirmed their willingness to be put forward for a second term;
- Cathy Scott-Burt would step down as parent governor due to work commitments. Subsequently, the parent governor vacancy had been advertised to eligible parents and two expressions of interest were received from highly suitable candidates. As one of the nominees had a legal background, James Adnett was contacted to discuss the current external governor vacancy given that the skills identified for this role were for an individual with legal background and experience. James was happy to be put forward for this position;
- Cathy's resignation meant that the SEND link governor role was now vacant and expressions of interest in taking on this role would be invited;
- Whilst it was not a requirement, it was recommended that a Careers link governor be identified. A role description will be drafted and presented to the Local Governing Body;
- Training needs forms would be issued to governors and feedback would help formulate the programme of training for next academic year;
- A survey had been shared with governors aimed at getting feedback on the timing of the annual conference which it had not been possible to hold as yet this year due to COVID restrictions, arrangements for peer appraisal and whether face-to-face meetings should resume next year. This feedback and recommendations would be presented to the Local Governing Body for their consideration and approval;
- The Committee was invited to review their cycle of business and terms of reference and a draft schedule of meetings was presented.

The Committee **noted** the information provided. The Committee agreed to **recommend for approval**:

- The re-appointment of Sean Devlin as external governor and member of the Curriculum and Quality Committee for a period of four years;
- The re-appointment of Matthew Adams as external governor and member of the Finance and Resources Committee for a period of four years;
- The re-appointment of Paul Cumming as external governor and member of the Finance and Resources Committee for a period of four years;
- The appointment of James Adnett as external governor and member of the Finance and Resources Committee for a period of four years;
- The appointment of Matthew Bennett as parent governor and member of the Curriculum and Quality Committee for a period of four years;
- The Committee's cycle of business and terms of reference without change;
- The Schedule of Meetings for 2021-22.

7. Student Union

The Clerk advised that the annual Student Union Report had been prepared by the President of the Union. The Principal noted that it had been a challenging year for the Union and they had lacked some consistency in terms of staff leading on this. In his role as Vice Principal (Progression, Quality and Impact), Luke Moseley would have a key role in overseeing the additional curriculum and student voice.

The Committee **noted** the information provided and thanked the Student Union for their report.

8. Policy Reviews

(i) Complaints Policy

The Clerk explained that the DfE circulated a template Complaints Policy for academies who were part of a MAT. It seemed sensible to adopt the template document with some revisions. This approach was endorsed by the Trust CEO in relation to the role of the Trust in investigating and responding to complaints in certain circumstances.

There was some discussion around the wording in relation to a complaint being made by telephone and the potential risk if complaints or concerns were not made in writing.

The Committee **approved** the new Complaints Policy subject to the wording in relation to a complaint being made by telephone being reviewed. The register of complaints was noted. The Principal explained that the increase in the number of entries did not reflect that there had been more complaints, but that the College's approach had shifted with concerns being proactively dealt with and responded to formally.

(ii) Safeguarding Annual Report

The report was received. It was noted that the introduction of e-safe was positive. The Principal noted that the software had alerted the College to concerns about several students which then enabled appropriate interventions and actions.

The Committee **noted** the annual report and extended thanks to the Senior Leader for Student Wellbeing for producing it.

(iii) Admissions & Fitness to Study Policy

The Principal outlined proposed changes to the priority criteria for entry to College which did not accurately reflect practice. The Committee **approved** the changes to the Admissions and Fitness to Study Policy as outlined. In response to a question, the Clerk advised that the role of Independent Vice-Chair of the Student Exclusions Appeal Panel had not yet been filled.

10. Closing Standing Items

(i) Risk Management:

The Principal presented the updated risk analysis report and the Committee **noted** the revisions.

(ii) Impact: The Committee noted their consideration and scrutiny of assessment procedures, IT provision and changes to the curriculum.

(iii) Any Urgent Business: No items were raised.

(iv) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 3rd November 2021 (subject to approval by the Local Governing Body).

The Committee thanked Cathy Scott-Burt and Rubia Amin for their contribution to the Committee during their respective times as Parent and Student Governors.

The meeting finished at 6.45pm.

Signed:.....

Sean Devlin (Chair of the Committee)

Date:.....

CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE: ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 19TH MAY 2021

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
C&Q/19.05.21/5ii	Consider whether blind marking could be extended to include other assessments in future years.	EYS/RJS	September 2021	
C&Q/19.05.21/6	Prepare and circulate a role description for the role of Careers Link Governor.	JJP	09.06.21	
C&Q/19.05.21/8i	Review wording of Complaints Policy in relation to concerns/complaints being raised by telephone rather than in writing.	EYS/JJP	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/03.02.21/5(ii)	Request that QIPs include a response to all areas identified by students as requiring improvement.	RJS	12.05.21	✓