

Governors Present: Gill Slater
Matthew Adams
Rubia Amin
Emma Bridges
Paul Cumming
Sean Devlin
Joe Durnall

Alex Gwinn
Sheena Payne-Lunn
Wendy Pickess
Ed Senior
Lucy Wilson

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

1. Apologies

Sam Lifford (technical difficulties), Cathy Scott-Burt and Cherry Yau.

2. Opening Standing Items

- (i) Gill Slater declared that whilst not a Trustee, she attended MAT Board meetings.
- (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 urgent business was identified.

3. Governor Training: 'Student Progress and Support'

The Senior Leader for Student Wellbeing provided an update to governors as part of the annual training programme. The following key points were raised:

- The Annex to the Safeguarding Policy detailing the response to COVID had been revised;
- The DfE revised the list of vulnerable students and this included children in need, looked after children, those with an EHCP, receiving support of a social worker or at risk of becoming NEET among other groups. A small number of these students continued to come to College during the current lockdown period;
- Safeguarding newsletters and wellbeing bulletins continued to be shared with students and added to the website;
- The tutorial programme had been revised to adapt to remote delivery and to reflect current need e.g. managing anxiety in the context of COVID, managing sleep, healthy relationships etc;
- Wellbeing checks were being undertaken for vulnerable students not currently in College on a weekly basis or more frequently where there were particular concerns. External meetings with county safeguarding bodies were continuing;
- National mental health awareness events continued to be promoted and it was pleasing that 45 students had trained to become Peer Mentors receiving training from the University of Worcester. A core group of these students had formed an action group focusing initially on the return to College and supporting students with this;
- The counselling arrangements were restructured and, although there was still a waiting list, this was reduced compared to previous years. Anxiety workshops were being offered and a Level 1 Counselling Skills course offered as enrichment;

- The LINK scheme was introduced in the autumn aimed at pairing students with others if they struggled to make friends or had moved from out of area etc. Approximately 28 students had benefitted from this scheme to date;
- E-safe software had been installed on all College computers and laptops issued to students and used keystroke technology to alert staff to inappropriate typing or searches;
- UCAS applications were positive with 460 applying by the deadline with more expected after. This was impressive given that personal statements were checked and follow up action having to be taken remotely;
- Opportunities for virtual work experience were promoted to students and as part of National Careers Week from 1st March, Student Services had produced subject PowerPoints to show how subjects link to particular career paths;
- Payment continued to be made direct to bank accounts from students in receipt of FSM and other support was provided in terms of discretionary support payments and other support including loan of laptops etc;
- There were increased number of students with mental health issues, others required support with bereavement and some with anxiety about a return to College;
- The Student Union was officially affiliated with the National Union of Students for the first time;
- The College was involved with the Back To School initiative launch by Worcestershire Children's First with 6 mentors due to start this week;
- Some of the College's students and alumni were producing music in support of the Music for the Soul campaign as part of the Welfare for Healthcare.

The Senior Leader for Student Progress delivered a presentation on how the College monitors student progress and the following key points were explained:

- The different measures of progress were explained including the minimum target grade, progress grade and the tracking completed as part of the summary assessments;
- Staff had access to profile sheets for their classes which indicated those with learning needs for example who required particular assessment support;
- The reasons for a mindset concern being added for a student were outlined and the number of these being recorded since January had increased;
- Tutors and Heads of Year were intervening with students for whom there were multiple concerns in more than one subject. In the recent summary assessment, 450 concerns had been identified relating to 280 students;
- A breakdown of the students on/off track by gender and ethnicity was outlined;
- The deadline for the next summary assessments was 17th March so many of these were taking place remotely ahead of 8th March return.

In response to questions the Senior Leader for Student Wellbeing and Senior Leader for Student Progress advised that:

- Whilst it was difficult to know how well students had engaged with the content of the wellbeing bulletins, the use of MailChimp meant it was possible to identify the percentage of students who opened any email and clicked on links;
- In response to the underperformance of Pakistani students, consideration was being given to finding routes into the community etc.

The Local Governing Body **thanked** the Senior Leader for Student Wellbeing and the Senior Leader for Student Progress for the training which ensured that governors were better informed in relation to how students were supported and the measures in place to monitor their progress.

4. Minutes

(i) Minutes of the meeting on 25th November 2020

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

5. Management & Strategic

(i) Principal's Update Report

The Principal presented his report and the following key points were noted:

- Details about the return on all students to College on 8th March had been confirmed by the government with all students who consent requiring a negative test result prior to a return to the classroom;
- Students would receive a test appointment to come into College on either 8th or 9th March with teaching cancelled on those days and resuming on 10th March;
- The College risk assessment and safety protocols would be updated to take account of staff and students to wear masks in the classroom where physical distancing cannot be maintained. The updated documents would be shared with stakeholders prior to a return;
- Students were to receive three tests onsite each three to five days apart. The second and third tests would require class groups being taken to be tested which would cause some disruption to lessons;
- Staff would test twice weekly from home from 8th March and tests could be collected from 1st March. Students would transition to home testing after the onsite testing was complete;
- There had not yet been an announcement about the awarding of final grades although this was expected imminently;
- Applications for September 2021 remained strong, however, in an analysis of the most recent cohort data, the size of the year 11 cohort is approximately 100 lower than the number in year 10 in the previous year. On the basis of smaller growth, the revised student target number for next academic year was 1521;
- Student growth this year meant that it was financially feasible to appoint additional staff in areas where numbers suggest that additional groups would be needed and current staffing levels were not sufficient to cover these. The forecast had been revised to indicate the impact on the surplus/deficit and EBITDA position of appointing four additional teachers. The EBITDA would remain above the 4% threshold deemed satisfactory by the ESFA and the College was likely to be more conservative in the number of appointments it made;
- Marketing activities and keep warm message to the year 11 cohort were continuing with a letter and booklet shared with the student and their parents.

In response to a question about the possibility of testing students before a return on 8th March, the Principal advised that initially the guidance was that this was not permitted although it had since changed to enable this to take place at the discretion of the institution. The College had already devised arrangements and it was not thought an earlier return for testing was necessary. The Local Governing Body **noted** the update and it was commented that the Question and Answer document mailed to year 11 students was excellent.

(ii) Risk Analysis

The Principal presented the updated risk document although acknowledged that some of the risks still needed to be reworded to read as a risk. The attention of governors was drawn to the risks where they remained high after control and mitigation measures and questions or comments were invited.

In response to questions it was explained that:

- In relation to T Levels, approximately 50% of the College's students were enrolled on an applied course, half of those were on a mixed group with the other half on a full applied programme. T Levels were pitched as vocational course although with only 1% of the courses not requiring students to have GCSE Maths or English, they were more aligned to A Levels although their introduction would remove the current applied route for students;
- Consideration was being given by departments to A Levels that replicate the benefits of the current applied offering, although there would be some subjects for which this was not an option. T Levels involved a significant work placement aspect which was okay for areas well-established in offering this, e.g. childcare, however, other areas would not be able to meet the level of placements required. The College was equipped to teach A Levels and Applied courses, but was not a vocational college able to support bricklaying courses, for example, so the whole concept was a challenge;
- The College was engaged with responding to the challenge that T Levels would provide and Colleges in the MAT were meeting to consider a collective approach and response. It was, however, noted that it was more of an issue for the College than others in the MAT due to the number of applied qualifications on offer.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the update and welcome a collective MAT approach to responding to the threat posed by T Levels.

6. Stakeholder Voice

The link visit reports including a SEND link visit meeting, a visit to Photography and meetings with the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead were **received** and the contents **noted**.

7. Quality Assurance

(i) Curriculum & Quality Committee minutes: 03.02.21

The Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee presented the minutes and noted the following:

- The College's students had received excellent care both in terms of safeguarding and wellbeing and remote learning which the Committee felt was effective and appreciation for the efforts of staff was noted;
- The Committee had approved the Remote Learning Policy;
- The increase in applications was pleasing;
- The Committee recommended the re-appointment of Alex Gwinn as Staff Governor.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the minutes and **approved** the re-appointment of Alex Gwinn as Staff Governor and member of the Curriculum and Quality Committee for a period of four years.

(ii) College Self-Assessment Report

The Deputy Principal presented the summary of the Self-Assessment Report which the Curriculum and Quality Committee scrutinised and recommended for approval. The Local Governing Body **unanimously approved** the Self-Assessment Report and the grades proposed.

8. Finance and Resources

(i) Finance and Resources Committee meeting minutes: 10.02.21

The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee presented the minutes and noted the following:

- Recommendations were made by the Student Exclusion Appeal Panel to suggest that student attention should continue to be drawn to the Code of Conduct and that, where individual needs suggested that it would be of benefit, discussions about learning support arrangements would involve the parents.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the minutes and the recommendations of the Exclusion Appeal Panel were **agreed** as sensible and should be adopted wherever possible. Governors acknowledged the importance of taking account of recommendations from this Panel and continuing to review practice and procedures.

9. Closing Standing Items

(i) Chair's Action

There were no actions taken by the Chair since the last meeting to report.

(ii) Health and Safety

The ongoing scrutiny by governors of COVID matters and the College's response was clearly aimed at promoting the health and safety of staff and students.

(iii) Risk Management

No additional risk management issues were identified that had not already been considered in the risk analysis document.

(iv) Impact

The training on student support and progress better equipped governors to monitor and challenge in these areas.

(v) Any Urgent Business: No additional items were raised.

(vi) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 9th June 2021 at 5.30pm.

On behalf of the Local Governing Body, the Chair thanked the Senior Leadership Team and all staff for their amazing response to the current and ongoing challenges as a consequence of the pandemic.

The meeting closed at 6.53p.m.

Signed:
Gill Slater (Chair)

Date:

LGB ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 24TH FEBRUARY 2021

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
None.				

ACTION POINTS BROUGHT FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/25.11.20/8	Consideration to be given to how staff governors might conduct a link visit to another area of College.	JJP	24.02.21	

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/25.11.20/6ii	Provide governors with a recalculated forecast.	APL	December 2020	✓

* Denotes amended action point.