

Governors Present: Gill Slater
Matthew Adams
Rubia Amin
Emma Bridges
Paul Cumming
Sean Devlin
Alex Gwinn

Sam Lifford
Sheena Payne-Lunn
Wendy Pickess
Cathy Scott-Burt
Ed Senior
Lucy Wilson

In Attendance: Ruth Scotson (Deputy Principal)
Jo Payne (Clerk to the Local Governing Body)
Andrew Leyland (College/MAT Accountant)

1. Appointments

The Clerk presented her report and the Local Governing Body **approved**:

- The re-appointment of Phil Douce as External Governor and member of the Finance and Resources Committee for a further four year term;
- The appointment of Joe Durnall as External Governor and member of the Curriculum and Quality Committee for four years;
- The appointment of Lucy Wilson as Student Governor and member of the Curriculum and Quality Committee for four years or until she ceased being a College student, whichever was sooner.

Lucy Wilson was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made.

Apologies

Phil Douce, Cherry Yau and Joe Durnall.

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) An item of urgent business was identified.

The Deputy Principal announced her decision to retire at the end of the academic year after 38 years of teaching, 29 of those at the College. The Chair said she hoped there would be opportunity to mark Ruth's contribution and service in the summer term.

3. Governor Training: 'Bridging the Gap'

The Senior Leader for Teaching and Learning and the Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator delivered a presentation to governors as part of the annual training programme. The following key points were explained:

- Bridging the gap has been a key focus of staff training days in the summer and autumn terms;

- The focus for new students was to prepare them for post-16 study with compulsory bridging tasks shared with them to provide a realistic view of what the subject was like. They also received post-16 mindset skills activities which were then considered in tutorial sessions;
- Support was provided on how to use Teams so that they were confident before joining College. The Digital Learning Co-ordinator prepared instructional videos and support guides to assist with this;
- Engagement with parents was felt to be significant and videos were shared on the Evening for Parents of New Students on the differences between KS4 and KS5 and revision tips to support their son or daughter;
- Staff were using low stakes testing to identify gaps in learning and then using strategies to make up the gaps in knowledge. For second year students staff were interleaving to revisit content from the lockdown period;
- The Worcester Working Week was launched with the aim of improving outcomes and supporting catch up through independent study. The Working Week outlines the minimum commitment that students should put in to include 15 hours in lessons and tutorial, 14 hours independent study and time on enrichment or volunteering. This was supported by an introductory video and webpage;
- Prior to the introduction of the emergency timetable there was high engagement with workshops, however, it had been more difficult where workshops had moved to remote delivery. There would be a renewed focus on identifying the students who needed to attend workshops with focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged students;
- Subject areas had been tasked with thinking about their assessment of students which class groups being ranked at various points in the year based on marked work. This assists staff when considering whether interventions were successful and would also be useful should centre assessment grades once again be needed;
- The support offered by Learning Support was outlined and the guidance shared with parents about support for remote learning was highlighted;
- The strategies of retrieval practice and spaced practice were explained in the context of A Level PE;
- The importance of finding the optimal time to revisit content was explained and an app was being piloted in PE which used an algorithm to determine when a student needed to revisit content and to test them on this with the aim of content becoming part of their long term memory;
- The Anki app was free on desktop PC's but there was a charge of £25 for iPhones which the Sport department was funding where students were disadvantaged. The impact of the strategy on this group of students would be reviewed;
- There would be a revision event for parents of second year students sitting external exams in the summer.

In response to questions the Senior Leader for Teaching and Learning and the Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator advised that:

- Anki was free to download on Android. There was only a cost for iPhones;
- The 32 hours of the Worcester Working Week represented a minimum expectation. It was explained to students that if used correctly, they could make good progress, but that in the run up to mock exams etc, significantly longer should be spent on independent learning.

The Local Governing Body **thanked** the Senior Leader for Teaching and Learning and the Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator for their presentation which ensured that governors were better informed in relation to supporting students with catch-up.

4. Minutes

(i) Minutes of the meeting on 16th September 2020

The minutes of the meeting were **agreed** as an accurate record and the action points updated. The Principal reported that it was not deemed necessary to introduce additional signage to mark one way systems as the new timetable had effectively reduced overcrowding in communal areas.

5. **Management & Strategic**

(i) Principal's Update Report

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

- There had been nineteen confirmed student cases since the start of term and one confirmed staff case. Other institutions had reported significantly more cases but many were in areas of even higher local infection rates;
- If proximity contacts were identified, it took approximately three hours to trace, advise of the need to isolate and communicate with parents;
- Further to previous concerns raised, the NHS app had not caused significant issues since;
- The emergency timetable continued to work well with communal areas remaining calm and quiet. Whilst not ideal for teaching and learning, staff and students were managing well;
- The response of the County Council to the request to review capacity of bus services was extremely positive and services had been adjusted to better fit with the new timetable. They were also considering whether an additional bus shelter on Spetchley Road would enable those waiting for different services to remain separate;
- The College continued to explore ways of enforcing the message about maintaining distance in and out of College and a video was produced with students featuring. The video was shown in a lesson and had subsequently been shared in a communication to students and parents. In the main, student compliance had been fantastic throughout whilst at College.

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

6. **Finance and Resources**

(i) Finance and Resources Committee meeting minutes: 11.11.20

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

- The Strategic Development Policy was considered and recommended for approval. In relation to this, the Principal was tasked with considering whether the headings in the Quality and Development Plan could be aligned with those in the new policy;
- The recommendations of the Exclusion Appeal Panel were considered and included notifying students of the reason for any request to leave the premises with the timescale and next steps clarified. The Panel also suggested that where statements were sought from staff, the interviewing officer should be present with a note taker in attendance.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the minutes.

After consideration and recommendation by both sub-committees, the Local Governing Body **approved** the Strategic Development Plan.

The recommendations of the Exclusion Appeal Panel were **agreed** as sensible and should be adopted where possible.

(ii) Finance Update

The Chair welcomed the College/MAT Accountant to his first Local Governing Body meeting. He presented the September update report and highlighted the following:

- As September was the first month of the financial year, not too great an emphasis should be placed on the figures;
- COVID meant that unplanned expenditure was needed. The ESFA had reimbursed £42,000 of the £75,000 claimed. A decision had yet to be made on the claim for IT equipment;

- Student recruitment of around 1490 students against the budget of 1404 was significant although the benefits of this would not be realised until next academic year due to the lagged funding;
- The College surplus was £134,000 against the budgeted surplus of £16,000. The significant variance was due to the front loading of bursary income with two-thirds of this received in September;
- Actual staff levels compared to the budget were over by approximately £200,000. This related to the action taken to reduce the amount of time full time teachers had for academic teaching instead providing support through workshops. Four more full-time equivalent teachers were in place compared to when the budget was produced;
- The EBITDA forecast was £525,000 before the MAT charge so there was some leeway to absorb the overspend.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- The forecast for August 2021 would be recalculated with a view to this being presented in November or December. Governors noted the importance of having a revised forecast so that they were aware of the likely position at the end of the academic year

The Principal advised that:

- It had been promised that funding per student (£4,188) would be protected in real terms, although the long term protection of additional funding in relation to teachers' pensions was unclear but would continue in the short term;
- The ½ block for enrichment or support for full time teachers was intended to improve provision and mitigate staff workload as this had been identified as a priority. It also brought the College's teachers more in line with colleagues at HSFC. The same overspend on staffing costs would not be expected next year. Staffing in place this year also supported the increase in the size of the student body;
- Maintaining or further increasing student numbers remained crucial. Demographics in the county were on an upward trajectory with the growth this year in Worcester schools where it would be hoped that progression to the College was more likely.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the contents of the update and thanked the College/MAT Accountant.

7. **Quality Assurance**

(i) Curriculum & Quality Committee minutes: 04.11.20

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

- The Committee had reviewed governors' performance against the agreed targets for 2019-20;
- The targets for 2020-21 were considered and the Committee agreed to recommend the same targets but the attendance target being increased from 80% to 84%;
- In considering the Strategic Development Plan the Committee had agreed to recommend the proposed changes to the Mission Statement and Strategic Aims.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the minutes. Changes to the Mission Statement and Strategic Aim and the targets for governor performance for 2020-21 were **approved**.

(ii) College Self-Assessment Report

The Deputy Principal presented the Leadership and Management section of the College's Self-Assessment Report and invited feedback from governors with a deadline of the first week in December. Governors were asked, in particular, to focus on section D9.

In response to comments, the Principal advised that he had subsequently prepared a more detailed commentary on the benefits of being part of the Heart of Mercia Multi-Academy Trust.

The Local Governing Body thanked the Deputy Principal for her efforts in preparing the Self-Assessment Report and **noted** the contents.

(iii) Quality and Development Plan

Further to the instruction of the Finance and Resources Committee to consider whether the headings of the Quality and Development Plan could be aligned to those in the new Strategic Development Plan, the Principal proposed the following:

- The Quality aspects of the Quality and Development Plan should be separated from the leadership and resources aspects to create a Quality Improvement Plan. This would be routinely updated and scrutinised by the Curriculum and Quality Committee given their remit;
- Leaderships and resource aspects currently in the Quality and Development Plan would be routinely reported to the relevant committee e.g. via the Property Strategy of Growth Strategy.

The Local Governing Body **approved** the proposal as outlined.

8. Stakeholder Voice

Parent Governor, Wendy Pickess, presented her link visit feedback report in relation to the virtual Open Event which she had joined. She reported that the event was good although noted it was a more difficult format for practical subjects to easily demonstrate what their subject involved. Participation of students was helpful. The virtual Open Event webpage was well presented and easy to navigate.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the feedback. The Principal added that, overall, feedback about the autumn term events had been positive, although overwhelmingly there was a desire to visit the College in person when circumstance permitted.

Governors were encouraged to conduct a link visit. Cathy Scott-Burt advised that she was due to meet with the Learning Support Manager soon in her capacity as SEND link governor.

In light of a request from a Staff Governor, the Clerk agreed to give consideration as to how staff governors might conduct a link visit perhaps by visiting another area of College outside of their own department.

9. Closing Standing Items

(i) Chair's Action

The Clerk reported that the Chair was asked to make a recommendation to the Local Governing Body in respect of a Governor appointment. The timing was such that the Curriculum and Quality Committee, which ordinarily makes such recommendations, had already met. Appointing a governor with quality assurance experience had been identified as a priority and, therefore, it was important to make the appointment at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the use of the Chair's action.

- (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
Consideration of COVID safety and questions focused on the need for a financial forecast meant that governors were better informed, therefore, mitigating risk.
- (iv) Impact
The Local Governing Body believed that they were better informed as a result of the training on 'Bridging the Gap. Governors were assured of the actions being taken by the College to support students with teaching and learning after the disruption to the learning.
- (v) Any Urgent Business: No additional items were raised.
- (vi) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 24th February 2021 at 5.30pm.
The Clerk explained that the Governors' Conference was currently scheduled for Saturday, 30th January 2021. However, in light of current COVID restrictions the Clerk proposed that the conference be postponed with a view to meeting in the spring or summer term. If, going forward, it seemed unlikely that a face-to-face meeting would be possible, postponement provided more time to consider what format a remote conference might take.

The meeting closed at 7.10p.m.

Signed:
Gill Slater (Chair)

Date:

LGB ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 25TH NOVEMBER 2020

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

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/16.09.20/6	Meet with teachers eligible for pay progression to outline the newly approved approach.	EYS	October 2020	✓
LGB/16.09.20/9(ii)	Consider whether additional signage to reinforce the one way system on the main staircase can be implemented.	EYS	ASAP	✓

* Denotes amended action point.