

Governors Present: Sean Devlin (Chair) Sheena Payne-Lunn
Matthew Adams Wendy Pickess
James Adnett Ed Senior
Phil Douce Caroline Shaw
Andrew Forth Larik Voitenko
Tom Gregory Sam Wilson

In Attendance: Jane Jenkins (Vice Principal Designate)
Jo Payne (Clerk to the Local Governing Body)

1. **Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair**

Sean Devlin and Sam Wilson were unanimously re-appointed as Chair and Vice Chair respectively for the 2024-25 academic year.

Following the sad and untimely passing of external governor, Kelvin Hard, there was a minute of silence and reflection.

2. **Apologies**

None.

3. **Opening Standing Items**

- (i) The Clerk declared an interest in the confidential item that would be reported as a Chair's action.
- (ii) Those parts of the agenda, where applicable, which referred to individual students or members of staff were identified as confidential to the Local Governing Body.
- (iii) No urgent business was identified.

4. **Minutes**

- (i) Minutes of the meeting on Wednesday, 5th June 2024

The minutes were **confirmed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair and an update was provided on the action points. The Principal confirmed that staff were consulted on the conduct statement and that this now appears on the College website.

5. **Quality**

- (i) Exam Results Overview

The Vice Principal presented the headline data from summer 2024 exam results and highlighted the following:

- A Level results were similar to last year and in line with national pass rates, with some improvement in A* to B grades. Value Added data indicates that students make expected progress;
- Subjects that performed 5% or more above national rates and those below were outlined. Biology was in the latter category and it was noted that whilst there was some improvement, this was not as much as was hoped. Subjects have been identified for subject improvement support and this year will include German and Music Technology;

- It was a strong year for applied courses with excellent outcomes in CPLD, improved outcomes in the Business three A level equivalent, however Criminology results were less positive and this has an impact given the number of students who studied this subject;
- All subject areas have been asked to consider where remarks should be considered and at the time of reporting 19 grades had been increased as the result of remarks;
- Meetings that taken place with HoDs to have an initial analysis of results;
- Year 1 of the Education T Level bucked the national picture with excellent retention and achievement. The Health T Level is being delivered this year for the first time;
- Results have been disaggregated by demographics and students in receipt of free college meals performed well;
- Level 2 performance was impressive both in GCSEs and applied courses and there was an improvement in attendance following significant effort on the part of the pastoral and subject teams to bring about this improvement.

In response to challenge, it was noted that:

- The prior attainment of last year's cohort was lower than the previous year so it was hoped that value added might be more positive given that nationally results were meant to be lower and back to pre-pandemic levels, however, grades were instead higher;
- It was the first year of results for the Music Technology A Level course and performance was of a level that there were serious discussions about discontinuing the subject for this academic year, however, it was agreed, given the lateness in the year to continue to deliver it with a robust plan for support agreed.

The Local Governing Body thanked the Vice Principal for her report and **noted** the contents provided.

(ii) Quality Improvement Plan 2023-24

The Vice Principal advised that the priorities last year will continue to be priorities. Progress against the targets was outlined including improved progression to Russell Group universities further to a focus on raising aspiration. The Local Governing Body **noted** the contents of the Quality Improvement Plan 2023-24.

(iii) Quality Improvement Plan 2024-25

The Vice Principal advised that the format of the Quality Improvement Plan for this academic year has been revised to fit the inspection framework. Priorities are in relation to improving value added, reducing the number of U grades, a focus on narrowing the disadvantage gap, AI and acting on feedback in relation to teaching and learning. It was explained that students who did not pass their end of year exams were required to sit a mandatory resit before the start of teaching and if they did not demonstrate an improvement there would be discussions about the suitability of their programme of study.

In response to challenge the following was noted:

- If there were discussions around changing a programme of study, this would have been around taking on a one year applied course so that the student would still have suitable qualifications overall to be able to progress;
- A good proportion of students who did resit their end of year exam improved their outcomes, but the Vice Principal agreed to feedback more detail on these outcomes;
- Students required to resit were not given a structured programme of work over the summer as this would have generated more work for teachers, however, they were set specific revision work that would best prepare them for the resit.

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

6. Strategic & Governance

(i) Summary of the Heart of Mercia Trust Board meeting

The summary of the board meeting was noted including the current status of the Trust's planned growth.

(ii) Trust Strategic Development Plan

The Trust Strategic Development Plan was noted. Governors asked that Trust strategies in relation to ILT and Estates be requested and shared with local governors.

(iii) Principal's Update Report

The Principal presented his update report and in response to Governor challenge the following was noted:

- Although prompt action in relation to offering a pay award of 5.5% was welcome, this is on the assumption that institutions had budgeted for a 3% increase so, once again, is only partially funded and this is not a sustainable position. It was noted that the SFCA are considering legal action and the pay increase would not apply to sixth form colleges, but would apply to 16-19 academies;
- There is greater uncertainty than ever in relation to the defunding of applied qualifications with a government review between September and December. The consequence is that it is not possible to tell students at Open Events what qualifications aside from A Levels they can study next year. The Principal has written twice to the MP without response as yet. It does seem likely that the approved Applied Alternative Qualifications (AAQs) can be delivered;
- The first phase of the fire safety improvement works were completed over the summer, however, due to losing two weeks and the tight deadline for completion, there is quite a lot of snagging that will need to be addressed at half-term;
- Enrolments are almost identical to last year. Despite more applications than ever demonstrating an ability to generate interest in the College, this has not translated into increased enrolment which will mean that the student number overall will be lower at the six week point with a negative impact on funding for next year in the region of £300,000, although it is hoped that timetabling efficiencies will get most of the way to the savings required.

The Local Governing Body thanked the Principal for his report and **noted** the contents.

(iv) Clerk's Update Report

The Clerk presented the update report and highlighted the following points:

- Following the sad passing of Kelvin Hard and the resignation of Paul Cumming and external governor and Duncan Clark as parent governor, a number of positions will be advertised. As part of the need to appoint suitable governors, there are link roles that need to be filled including SEND and Careers. The need to identify a replacement safeguarding governor so that the Chair did not have to continue in this role was emphasised;
- The year 1 student governor vacancy will be promoted to students with a view to presenting the successful candidate to the next Local Governing Body meeting;
- The Governance Handbook has been updated and will be emailed in full to governors;
- Governors are required to complete the annual declarations and these will be emailed to governors;
- Governors were encouraged to identify an opportunity to conduct a link visit.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the contents of the report and requested that the Clerk share an outline of College events for the purpose of link visits.

(v) Marketing Annual Report

The annual Marketing report was presented and the following noted:

- An audit of post-16 provision and curriculum across the county has been conducted and can be used to identify subjects where the College is one of only a small number of providers and use this in publicity materials accordingly;
- A review of demographic data indicates a 10% increase in the year 11 cohort by 2028-29 following a year of slight decline;
- College open events were well attended and feedback was positive;
- Communication with applicants and their parents has continued and is thought these keeping warm activities remain really important;
- Communication with parents has remained a strength as is communication more generally on the College's social media platforms.

In response to challenge it was noted that:

- Applicants do receive information about travelling to College including where they are travelling by train from further afield. It was suggested that it would be useful for all staff to have a crib sheet ahead of an open event with details about travel and some other key points so that they are better informed if asked questions within subject areas.

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

7. Stakeholder Voice

- The Chair of the Local Governing Body reflected on his visit to scrutinise safeguarding arrangements and on this occasion provided challenge in relation to the single central record which appeared comprehensive. Feedback from the Art Exhibition was also noted.
- The Student Governor shared feedback from the Student Union in relation to the firmer policy on the use of mobile phones in lessons. He reported that some students felt this change of policy was unfair in subjects like art where students were previously able to listen to music as background when working on projects etc. The Principal advised that the College's policy has always been that mobile phones should not be used in the classroom unless directed by the teacher as part of the lesson, however, this was not being applied consistently. If the policy were to be adapted and music permitted in particularly subjects, this would result in other teachers having to challenge misuse and it was not fair to ask teachers to police this. The Local Governing Body were in full support of the College policy and believed that it was an approach that would best prepare students for employment where mobile phones cannot be used/music cannot be played.

8. Policy Reviews

(i) Student Union Constitution and Code of Practice

The Policy was approved without change.

(ii) Management of the College Policy

The Principal explained that the policy and organisation chart has been revised to take account of some changes to staff roles and responsibilities. Following the departure of the Senior Leader for Teaching and Learning, associate members of SLT have been appointed to take on responsibility for teaching and learning, staff development/ECTs and vocational and technical qualifications. The Senior Leader for Progression has assumed responsibility for high school liaison. The Senior Leader for ILT is no longer a Head of Year and has instead taken on responsibility for enrichment. There are now three dedicated Heads of Year with one tutor promoted to the role this year.

The Senior Leader for Quality Assurance, who already had a MAT role overseeing policy implementation and review, has been promoted to Director of Operations for the Trust, but the College will still retain 40% of his services with a focus on quality assurance. The Marketing Co-ordinator, formerly a co-opted member of SLT has been promoted to the role of Senior Leader for Marketing, Communications and Strategic Co-ordination.

The Local Governing Body noted the updated and **approved** changes to the policy subject to recent changes being reflected in the organisation chart.

- (iii) Quality Assurance Policy
The Local Governing Body **approved** the changes as outlined to the Quality Assurance policy.
- (iv) Freedom of Speech Policy
The Local Governing Body **approved** the Freedom of Speech policy without change.
- (v) Early Career Framework Policy
Updates to the policy in relation to a change of appropriate body was noted.
- (vi) Safeguarding Policy
The policy has been updated to reflect changes to Keeping Children Safe In Education 2024 and changes to College personnel who are part of the safeguarding team. The Local Governing Body **approved** the Safeguarding Policy with the changes outlined.
- (vii) Managing Allegations
The Local Governing Body **approved** updates to the Managing Allegations policy based on requirements in Keeping Children Safe In Education 2024. The number of low level concerns raised in relation to staff and the nature of these and the action taken was noted. It was noted that further to publication of this data, there was one staff dismissal where professional standards were not met which was subject to appeal at the time the report was shared.
- (viii) Business Continuity Plan
The Local Governing Body **approved** the Business Continuity Plan with updates as outlined.

9. Closing Standing Items

- (i) Chair's Action: Details are contained within a confidential minute.
- (ii) Health and Safety: The fire safety works to compartmentalise the main staircase were noted.
- (iii) Risk Management: Although identified as a risk in the risk register, the scoring of the risk relating to defunding of applied qualifications will be revisited in light of the government's pause and review.
- (iv) Impact: Governor scrutiny of exam results and strategies to bring about further improvement were noted.
- (v) Any Urgent Business: None.
- (vi) Date of Next Meeting: 27th November 2024.

The meeting closed at 6.58pm.

Signed:
Sean Devlin (Chair)

Date:

LGB ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 11TH SEPTEMBER 2024

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/11.09.24/5(iii)	Share more detail on the number of students demonstrating improvement in the September resit.	JLJ	November 2024	
LGB/11.09.24/6(ii)	Request relevant ILT and Estates strategic plans from the Trust.	JJP	September 2024	
LGB/11.09.24/6(iv)	Prepare and share an outline of College events with governors.	JJP	September 2024	
LGB/11.09.24/6(v)	Produce a crib sheet for staff ahead of the open events e.g. travel support.	JJP	October 2024	

ACTION POINTS BROUGHT FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
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ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/05.06.24/8(iii)	Consult with staff on the conduct statement for parents and share the finalised version.	EYS	July 2024	✓

* Denotes amended action point.