

Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on Thursday 8 December 2022 at 5.00 pm held at the Stratford upon Avon Campus

Present

Christine Abbott
Paul Assinder – Joint Vice-Chair of Governors
Scott Beasley
Tasleem Chaudary
Rebecca Gater- Principal
Vic Gwozdz - FE Student Governor
Barbara Hughes – Chair of Governors
Lucy Lee
Amirun Nehar
Sally Tomlinson

In Attendance

Heather Evans -Deputy Principal
Pete Haynes -Vice Principal HR & Student Service
Lee Jamieson – Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum
Mary Younan – Director of Higher Education, Apprenticeships & Employer Engagement [Item 9]
Sam Bromwich - Director of Corporate Governance, Risk and Compliance

Celtic Murray – Minutes

1. Apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and presented apologies from Tony Lucas, Sarah Horton-Walsh, Harrison Thompson, Geraldine Swanton and Donna Poole, who were unable to attend.

2. Declarations of interest in relation to this agenda

There were no conflicts of interests declared.

3. Minutes from previous Corporation meeting held on 29th November 2022

The minutes of the meeting on 29 November 2022 were noted and approved without any amendment.

Matters Arising

3.1 Members' Report / Financial Statements

The final version of the Members' Report and Financial Statements were submitted to Corporation. It was agreed to:

Approve this document for final sign off and to be submitted by the deadline of the end of December.

3.2 EDI SiG - Chair and Terms of Reference to be agreed

The Chair asked for volunteers to chair the new proposed Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Special Interest Group. Sally volunteered to be the Chair of this Special Interest Group which will meet in the new year. **Action**

3.3 ONS update: Reclassification of Colleges

The Deputy Principal advised that two letters have been received outlining the outcome of the ONS review. The changes are mainly administrative and the worst fears have not been incorporated. Therefore, it was agreed to remove this as a Top Key Risk. The actions will still be monitored through the strategic risk register. **Action**

The following item was deemed to be confidential from the Student and Staff Governor and the Student Governor left the meeting during its discussion.

3.4 Chair's Action 05 December 2022 [confidential]

4. Strategic Plan

The Principal advised that following feedback from the Governors' strategy development day, the Strategic Plan had been updated. The Governors had provided excellent feedback on the plan. The Governors **approved** the Strategic Plan.

5. Self-Assessment 21/22 & QIP 22/23 (Including final achievement report): Governance SAR (Chair)

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum presented this item and discussed the themes that were present within the Self-Assessment Report. There are two key actions from the Quality Improvement Plan.

Pandemic Recovery - the impact of Covid absences was discussed in the context of no exam modification allowances, as had been the case during the pandemic. The pandemic has caused cohorts of students who are sitting level 2/3 exams with no first-hand exam experience at GCSE level, as a result the College had to provide additional support to prepare students for the physical exam environment. The overall achievement of the College has declined to 81%.

Attendance - to be the targeted area for improvement. The College has tried to tackle attendance issues previously but the strategies have not been effective. The College recognises that low attendance is a symptom not a cause, as a result further research will take place on the cause/s.

Q: Are EMT assured that the QIP identifies the gaps from last year's SAR and includes all the key actions in preparation for Ofsted?

A: Yes, the QIP is the key document that will drive improvement. It is mapped to the Areas for Improvement (AFIs) identified in the SAR and is also mapped to the AFIs identified in the Ofsted report. The College QIP is linked to the departmental QIPs in each curriculum area, which are led by the Heads of School.

The Chair highlighted the importance of the SAR and the QIP and that all governors needed to become familiar with both documents.

Self-Assessment report was approved by the Governors and must be signed by both the Principal and the Chair. **Action**

The Governors also noted the Quality Improvement Plan for 2022/23.

6. In-Year Student Progress Report

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum presented this item and discussed the contents of the report.

Q: What support are you going to offer for students?

A: Last year, engineering students could sit and pass the exams. However, they were not prepared for the coursework. The focus this year is on assisting students with both their exams and coursework and other skills that they have not been able to develop at school. Progression coaches are being introduced fixed term until 2024 and will be allocated to those areas where progress needs to improve. The 16-18 Tuition Fund is being used. This support will begin from January, each progression coach will have a caseload of specific students.

Q: How different is this set of data compared to pre-covid and pre-pandemic?

A: The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum said this has not been compared and he will produce this comparison. **Action**

Q: Is there any way to measure the target grade to ensure that lower target grades are not being provided to make students appear as green/on track?

A: This is system generated and is based on GCSE grades. These are reviewed throughout the year. This is a standard approach used across the sector.

The Governors noted the report.

7. Deep Dive Report Autumn 22

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum presented this item and discussed the contents of the report which he explained only contains a couple of deep dives in the timescale; others will be reported on at future Corporation meetings.

This report identified attendance as a persistent issue.

Q: Which areas?

A: There are 2 deep dive summaries. The curriculum areas in scope need adding. There is a typo regarding short term actions. **Action**

Q: Who carries out the deep dive?

A: The Deep Dive team consists of Senior Leaders / Quality Leads / Teaching and Learning coaches and some Heads of Schools. Heads of Schools are not involved in their own deep dives to ensure objectivity.

Q: Are there dates for when you expect to have these in place?

A: These are risk rated and are scheduled throughout the year in advance.

The Governors noted the report.

8. Teaching & Learning Update

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum presented this item and discussed the contents of the update. He pointed out Appendix 1 as being valuable as it provides an overview of the strengths and areas of development which arose from the College's learning walk.

Q: Can Governors take part in learning visits as usual?

A: Yes, some were carried out last week. Very positive. Now the results have just been collected, a summary will be produced for the February 2023 Corporation meeting. They are called Learning Visits not walks and it is clear they are not making a judgment on teachers.

Q: Are missed attendance reasons tracked? Is Covid still a factor?

A: No, this is not tracked. Unlikely to do this as Covid rates of the College are low.

Q: Is there not a requirement to record lack of attendance reasonings?

A: No, this is different with schools as students are legally required to attend. This cannot be mandated at the College. The personal tutor will have the conversation with students and can ask them these questions. The learning walks will be added to the governors' dashboard. Governors can also look at enrolment and attendance levels. **Action**

Q: What about the students who are absent because of mental health problems?

A: If a young person is suffering from mental health issues, it is better for them to be in College where they can get the support that they need, which is better for them than being absent. If the mental health problems stop them from engaging, then it is much more difficult for the College to support them.

Q: Would the Student Governor be comfortable to have a chat outside of the meeting about this?

A: Yes, happy to give feedback. **Action**

The Governors noted the update.

The Dean of HE & Research joined the meeting for item 9 – and left after the discussion.

9. Higher Education Update

This item was presented, and the contents of the update discussed. The National Student Survey Report was written internally this year, whereas usually the report is written by an external contractor. The results showed that overall satisfaction had improved but there were still some areas for improvement which were largely IT and Wifi related.

The College previously held a Gold standard for the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). However, the Office for Students downgraded this to a Silver due to the merger with Stratford College. There is a new TEF process meaning that everything you write in the list from January 2023, the OFS will ask a sample of colleges to provide their evidence. References need to be strong and authentic, to secure the accreditation. There is also a new category rating of "Inadequate" and Ofsted and OfS regulations will apply to all level 4 and above provision.

The TEF panels have already been decided with further education panel members being included. The College has to be 2.5% above the benchmark to achieve a gold standard.

Q: What proportion of the panel members are FE?

A: 25-30%, although there is not necessarily an FE person on every panel.

The Governors noted the update.

10. Student Satisfaction Survey Results

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum presented this item and discussed the contents of the results. Overall, student satisfaction is still high but has dropped slightly. 96% "would recommend to a friend" previously which has dropped slightly to 93% which appeared to be because of engineering, computing, and business courses. These courses will be analysed further to identify the reasons for concern. **Action**

Heads of Schools have already started to look within their areas to see what is high and low. The results of these reviews will be provided to SLT.

It was noted that student feedback is used to make improvements and tell students how their comments have helped.

It was noted that there appeared to be a split by ethnicity with black British and mixed white Asian having lower results to recommend the College than others. Focus groups will be carried out to investigate why this is the case. The EDI analysis will feed into the EDI SiG.

Action

The survey will be repeated for a second time at the end of the year.

Q: Stratford overall satisfaction is higher?

A: Yes, this is most likely due to the investment currently taking place at Stratford.

Q: Have you been able to investigate the comments yet?

A: Comments are not shared as there are names on there and there is a large volume of comments. Heads of Schools will tackle these comments. Hair and Beauty have received extremely positive comments.

The Governors noted the results.

11. Complaints Report

The Vice Principal Quality & Curriculum presented this item and discussed the contents of the report. There has been a small increase in complaints which is understandable given the challenging year with increased complaints particularly around the lack of IT equipment. In response to this, students have now had access to upgraded macs and software licences.

Q: Do you find it concerning to see that poor teaching as a complaint has been upheld or partially upheld in some cases?

A: There are two factors to consider here. The first being that for technical courses it is difficult to recruit members of staff e.g., engineers. The other factor is that the data refers to last year where disruption was experienced which impacted the ability to run classes. For example, some lessons being moved online last minute, however, the College had to do what needed to be done to be operational. There was one complaint upheld and two partly upheld in relation to poor teaching.

Q: Do we have to report complaints?

A: No. It is reported internally to Governors.

Q: Is there a comparison of our complains to that of our peers?

A: No. There is trend analysis of complaints in the annual report.

The Governors noted the report.

12. Draft agenda for Governors' Development morning Saturday 11th Feb 2023

The Governors noted the draft agenda.

13. Items For Information

13.1 Bids and Projects Report

The Governors noted the report.

13.2 Membership Report

The Director of Corporate Governance presented the Membership Report and stated it is now accurate and it is important to keep this updated for forward planning and succession planning. The governing body should be representative of students.

Following the recent Autumn Term recruitment of new Governors and interviews held in November 2022, The Chair proposed that Ravi Kumar be appointed as a full Corporation member, and she noted that he has relevant experience in the sector.

It was resolved to approve the appointment of:

Ravi Kumar, as a full member of Corporation for one year in the first instance, with effect from 01 December 2022 to 30 November 2023.

Christine Abbott left the meeting for part of the discussion of the Membership Report and rejoined for the remaining items.

It was resolved to approve the extension of the term of office for **Christine Abbott** for the full four years to 30 November 2025.

13.3 Tender Update Report

The Governors noted the update.

13.4 Notes of the Ofsted SiG meeting held on 23 November 2022

The Governors noted the minutes of this meeting.

14. Any other Business: Verbal feedback from Annual AoC Conference 2022

Five of the College's Governors attended the AoC Conference and found it valuable. They highly recommend Governors attend next year. Detailed feedback on the conference is available on BoardEffect.

Dates in the New Year:

- Date of next Corporation meeting - 1st February 2023 at Blossomfield Campus
- w/b 6th February – Learning Visits and/or Student Focus Groups
- Governors' Development Morning: Saturday 11th February 2023

The Governors noted the meeting dates for the New Year.

Signed



Date 01 February 2023