

The Henley College Board

**MINUTES of the Meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee
held on Monday 23 November 2020 at 15.30
via remote participation**

| MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr Tim Lincoln James Lingard Trevor Watkins Satwant Deol Lizzie Watts Keith Heron | Independent Member/Chair Independent Member/Vice Chair Independent Member Principal Independent Member Co-opted Member | CLERK: Jacky Gearey | BY INVITATION: Tristan Arnison Julian Brinsford Kathryn Mogford Eamonn Egan | Head of Faculty (HoF) Head of Faculty & Quality Manager Head of Student Services (HSS) Interim Vice Principal (VP) |
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| Agenda Item | Minutes | Action by | | |
| 2.1 | Opening of Meeting and Welcome The Chair opened the meeting at 15.33 | | | |
| 2.2 | Apologies for Absence 1. Andrew Unsworth – the Chair asked the Principal about the Mr Unsworth and his family who were all recently diagnosed with Covid and to convey the committee’s best wishes for a speedy recovery 2. Andrea Wood – family sickness 3. Mohammed Khaliel Clerk advised that Keith Heron would be arriving later due to work commitments. | | | |
| 2.3 | Declaration of Interests There were no declarations of interest. | | | |
| 2.4 | Minutes of Previous Meeting (i) Meeting of 28 September 2020 The minutes of 28 September 2020 were agreed and to be signed as an accurate record by the Chair. Resolved: (i) the Board agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting of 28 September 2020 and the minutes to be signed by the Chair | | | |
| 2.5 | Matters Arising from the Minutes Item 1.10 - to produce a summary of the positive points and a forecast of what is being developed together with the areas of success and improvement to put into the QIP - this to be provided for the next meeting in March 2021. Item 1.14 - to recommend to the Board Chair a revised link governor report – the Chair apologised for not doing this currently but advised that this would be reviewed for the next meeting in the interim the current report form should be used. There were no further matters arising. | | | |
| 2.6 | Update on the impact of Covid-19 on quality and standards The HoF provided an updated overview of the college’s approach in responding to Covid and its impact on curriculum which had in part been discussed at both the previous Board and QS meetings, putting into context the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liaison with other colleges & timetabling models – the college had blended learning from the start of the pandemic and had put in place a new timetable that has supported students. Currently 68% of students were on site at any one time with the exception of Wednesdays. Chair asked about the students’ associated costs of traveling on public transport for those days that they did not come into college, the changes to the timetabling and the students’ reaction to | | | |

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the cost of fares. HSS said that there has been no impact to the students on these issues and very little negative impact on the use of buses.

- Benchmarking group – using the Wessex group – the college was currently doing very well compared with other institutions.
- Face-coverings – mandated for all students inside classrooms and buildings but it has required constant policing, but the compliance was now high. Chair asked if students were given any guidance on wearing masks outside the college – HoF said yes but that there is no requirement to wear them outside buildings, however they are required to wear them on buses in addition HSS said all guidelines on travelling are on the college website. Staff had been provided with visors to ensure that all students could clearly hear as masks muffled the teachers' voices
- Managing self-isolation and confirmed Covid cases – the picture is constantly changing. There were a number of concurrent Covid cases with additionally those that have had to be self-isolated due to close contact. There was a greater number of cases in vocational subjects than in the A level cohorts. Some of these students were now on distance learning whilst others were on blended learning depending on the number of students self-isolating. Chair said that the numbers were low in comparison to other institutions and HoF agreed.

Chair asked about the efficiency of online learning? HoF explained that full remote learning over a prolonged period of time was challenging and student progress is not the same as onsite which the students preferred. It was easier to manage blended learning for vocational programmes where much of the time is spent on coursework.

Chair asked about the entry requirements for universities and the reference that it had been reported that they will judge the students more leniently for those on a prolonged lockdown? HoF said that there might be a further use of Central Assessment Grades (CAGs) and that this same situation was being experienced at the college with those students coming through with CAGs for GCSEs.

Committee asked what were the college provision if the situation deteriorates? HoF advised that the DfE does not want the institutions to go to full remote learning without their authority to do so. The key issue is what are the majority of students doing i.e. blended learning. If the number of students concurrently increases to 8-10 then then the opening of the college will have to be revised. Chair referenced a recent letter from Gavin Williamson which said that schools and colleges should not decide by themselves to close or partially close because of the coronavirus. If the SLT believes the College has reached a situation where it needs to close or partially close because of the coronavirus, the College should contact the ESFA and PHE for guidance. The Chair therefore want to know what the process was for the governors concerning a possible closure of the college and adopting blended learning. VP advised that there is a blended learning policy but will adjust for the governors' sign off. Involvement regarding the governors in a timely manner and the chain of command is to be formally designated. With this assurance the committee accepted the recommendation.

- Second lockdown, staff survey and student focus groups – majority of staff feedback opposed to total blended learning in the college.
- Teaching and learning implications – Chair asked if the recent teacher infection impacted the staff. Principal said that there are a number of staff feeling very nervous. Board Chair did say that care of staff is as important as that of students. Additionally, the HoF confirmed that feedback from the students was that they are happier to be told what to do rather than being given guidance. Committee asked about testing in particular using private organisations and taking student temperatures daily. HoF said that temperatures checking had been discussed but that it was not reliable, and the costs of private testing were prohibitive. Committee asked whether there were any concerns about curriculum areas and teachers being absent - HoF said that there were two areas currently of concern namely extended diploma courses and engineering.

Resolved that:

- (i) **the update report on the impact of Covid-19 on quality and standards was received by the committee**

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| | (ii) Committee accepted the recommendation from the Gavin Williamson letter as detailed by the Chair | |
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| 2.7 | <p>Safeguarding and Prevent Update</p> <p>Safeguarding HSS said that the number of students with anxiety issues was considerably higher now than in previous years and that these were not all due to Covid. Currently there were now two academic staff on the safeguarding team and this should make a significant difference in dealing with some issues.</p> <p>Prevent As per the government's notification, the Prevent level is now severe and the students are being made of this especially online radicalisation and the far right.</p> <p>Student Services The Student Services Department continues to be incredibly busy as the number of students with significant mental health problems is again higher this year. The HSS provided figures on the number of students considered to be at risk to themselves with a further number identified as those who are vulnerable due to mental health disorders. The Counsellor has a three-week waiting list and HSS emphasised that she hoped this would continue as the department would be unable to cope without this service.</p> <p>A quantity of students with an EHCP (educational health care plan) who have diagnosed autism and require a good deal of support outside the classroom due to social and emotional difficulties with additional students who have ASD and use the welfare services daily. There were also more students with social care involvement compared to last academic year. The HSS advised that the situation described above was similar to other colleges.</p> <p>Chair picked up on the numbers mentioned and asked why there were a smaller number on the far end of the safeguarding risk register – HSS said that this number referred to significant risks and explained how the register worked. Chair asked about the number with autism and HSS explained that there were some at risk of self-harming and that the severity of the risk would dictate whether to be put on the risk register. Chair asked whether this was the lack of resources and HSS agreed that some of this was the case and that additional resources had been sought but reassured the committee that the support was in place for vulnerable students.</p> <p>The Vice Chair as the safeguarding governor asked for an update on the counselling and additional administration support that was promised ? Principal said that Head of HR and HSS were dealing with this although HSS said that it was not only admin support that was required. Principal said that she would take this offline with HSS and safeguarding governor.</p> <p>As a point to note HSS informed the committee that 77 students had not disclosed their medical issues on enrolment, and this had caused major issues. However, going forward this lack of information has been addressed now with a new disclosure process which will ensure that not only will the database be current but also will ensure support packages are put in place.</p> <p>Committee asked if the college did a mid-year check to see the progression of these students and HSS confirmed that this was done.</p> <p>The Safeguarding governor wanted to have it minuted that on behalf of Board he wanted to say thank you to the HSS and team for all their hard work.</p> <p>Resolved that the Safeguarding and Prevent Update was received by the Board</p> | |
| 2.8 | <p>Draft Self-Assessment Report</p> <p>The HoF explained the 2019/20 College Self-Assessment Report as presented was for discussion and approval. The grades that have been provisionally awarded are good and in line with the Ofsted grading of good. Each section has a table of areas for improvement as detailed in the report.</p> <p>The Chair asked the HoF about the general self-assessment grading as compared with the comments made in the recent FEC report and was advised that the grading is not on a sliding scale but was binary. The judgement of outstanding was college based however the Chair wanted to know why did the college not grade more critically? HoF explained that the grading was in line with Ofsted EIF explaining</p> | |

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| | <p>that the Ofsted inspection in October had consisted of a deep dive 4-day inspection with several inspectors speaking to numerous students and staff members. The approach was in depth, thorough and rigorous. However, the FEC on the other hand, had spent very little time with staff and students on their recent virtual visit and had no critical methodology as they are a finance review body reporting to the ESFA. In addition, the FEC had said that Ofsted were the experts not them. Moreover, the VP confirmed that the FEC did not have an issue with the college's grading but whether the college was getting ahead of itself by saying that some areas were outstanding.</p> <p>Chair was concerned about the impression it gave and the emphasis on certain sections, the VP explained that the format of the report follows the sections of the current Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and allows judgements to be aligned to the criteria and standards expressed in the EIF, as used by Ofsted.</p> <p>Chair then commented that the SAR read as a complimentary discourse and that it felt there was an element of complacency namely a question of stress and emphasis. Principal said that the Maths and English GCSEs and tutorials were areas of weakness and referred to the changes in the timetabling to help address this. Committee asked how does the college go from good to outstanding within the next three years and what was the role of governors in this progression appreciating that there was a need to drive the college forward. VP said that currently the SAR has been drafted as if for Ofsted inspectors but that he agreed with these comments. In looking at the QIP, this is where the college has extracted the areas for improvement trying to address each aspect of the criteria with the balance between strengths and weaknesses and this will be taken on board in writing the report in the future.</p> <p>Keith Heron joined the meeting at 17.02</p> <p>The VP then briefly referred to areas for improvement that have emerged from the SAR albeit this was to be discussed under item 2.9.</p> <p>The VP then asked the committee to approve the grades in the SAR which the committee so agreed based on Ofsted and FEC.</p> <p>Resolved that</p> <p>(i) the 2019/20 College Self-Assessment Draft Report was received by the committee</p> <p>(ii) the committee approved the grades in the SAR based on Ofsted and FEC</p> | |
| 2.9 | <p>Quality Improvement Plan 2020 – 2021</p> <p>The Chair asked the VP to summarise the report highlighting those points of note. The VP advised on the areas for improvement outlined in the plan explaining that they are derived from the 2019/20 Self-Assessment Report. They are categorised under the EIF headings of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Education (Intent, Implementation, Impact), • Leadership and Management, • Behaviour and Attitudes, and • Personal Development. <p>3.1.1 - There followed a very lengthy and robust debate around intent and driving up the levels of ambition, expectation and standards expected of students. In essence the Chair said that this needs to be at the highest level and wanted to know how governors would know that the actions have been achieved and the objectives set, and that the insertion of targets would make this quantifiable and far easier to digest. VP agreed and said that this would be provided through set targets with corresponding actions, updates and challenging KPIs. In addition, the Principal said that the college planned to bring in a dashboard. Chair appreciated the difficulty in writing a report to cover FEC, Ofsted and governor requirements but believed that 3.1.1 needed to be rearticulated to cover the points raised by the Principal regarding student engagement. Chair articulated on behalf of the committee that there is a level of frustration and a conflict of the level of contribution that governors can be make because of the becoming too involved in operational issues which was not helpful.</p> <p>3.1.4: Use an analysis of destinations data to inform curriculum planning – in the plan as part of area for improvement in Ofsted report.</p> <p>3.1.5: Use an analysis of work experience data to inform curriculum planning – in the plan as part of area for improvement in Ofsted report.</p> | |

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| | <p>The committee also discussed in some detail the length of some of the reports provided and the amount of information that was being presented requesting that this be reduced to an executive summary. In so doing these summaries would restate the purpose of the report, providing a brief overview of the entire report, summarising the key points with any results, conclusions, or recommendations allowing the board to understand what they can expect to learn. This was felt to be a more beneficial use of time.</p> <p>Chair asked for a rework on some of this plan based on the discussion at this meeting namely measurements and evidence and for this to be sent to all the committee members. Principal and VP agreed that this approach would be very constructive and were conscious that the tone of the plan needed to be altered together with a reduction in the amount of the written word.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>(i) the Quality Improvement Plan 2020 – 2021 was received by the committee</p> <p>(ii) VP to rework the QIP based on the discussion of the meeting to include targets and actions</p> | VP |
| 2.10 | <p>Committee Self-evaluation</p> <p>The Chair went through the committee self-evaluation comments noting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possible parental governor involvement on the committee – discussion covered the possibility of over focus on specific topics that the parent governor might be most familiar with but had to be balanced against the greater insight and coal-face management that could be brought to the committee. Board Chair said he would look at this including the possibility of appointing an ex parent as a co-opted governor through the Governance & Search committee 4. Governors had been critical of SLT albeit this comment was no longer valid, the committee felt that negative comments created adversarial and challenging issues. 5. Mismatch about the amount of detail to be provided in reports. Principal asked whether this model should be adopted and there followed a debate about the length of reports to be read by governors as previously discussed under 2.9. There was a consensus that the executive summary should be expanded to no more than 1 1/2 pages capturing the key elements and decisions with any associated detail attached as an appendix, and for this to be trialled by the SLT on an exploratory basis for the next meeting. <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>(i) the compilation of committee self-evaluation replies was received by the committee</p> <p>(ii) Board Chair to look at the possibility of appointing either a parent governor or co-opted ex parent to the committee</p> <p>(iii) SLT to provide an expanded executive summary for all agenda papers for next meeting</p> | Board Chair SLT |
| 2.11 | <p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no other business</p> | |
| 2.12 | <p>Items to be taken forward to next Board meeting:</p> <p>(i) Draft Self-Assessment subject to changes discussed</p> | |
| 2.13 | <p>Date and Time of Next Meeting:</p> <p>i. 23 March 2021 at 17.00</p> <p>ii. 21 June 2021 at 17.00</p> | |
| | <p>Close of Meeting</p> <p>The meeting closed at 18.05</p> | |
| | <p>MINUTES of the meeting held on 23 November 2020 were agreed and accepted as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair</p> <p>..... on</p> | |

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