

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

FRIDAY 17 APRIL 2015



GATESHEAD COLLEGE

Report: Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19 March 2015

Author: Clerk

Action: Approve

Status: Open

Present: Robin Mackie (Chair)
Rachel Clark
Catherine Dennis
Judith Doyle
Darren Heathcote
Ivan Jepson
Chris Macklin
David Mitchell
John McElroy

In attendance: John Gray
John Holt
Nadine Hudspeth
Mark Thompson
Chris Toon
Suzanne Clark
Andrew Robson
Samantha Pritchard (Clerk)

1899 Chair's Welcome / Apologies and Conflicts of Interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Emily Cox, Kevin Fitzpatrick, Sally Hancox, Nick Hurn and Mark Taylor.

The Chair advised that members should declare any conflict of interest.

Whilst it did not conflict with any items on the Agenda, the Chair requested that it be noted that he currently has a business interest residing in the Barmston Court building.

The Chair advised that an additional item has been added to the Agenda. Andrew Robson; Strategy Manager – Quality & Performance will be delivering a presentation on data currently being used to drive performance improvements.

1900 Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11 December 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11 December 2014 were accepted as a true record.

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1901 Matters Arising

The Chair reported that he and the Principal had recently met with Keith Cann-Evan's wife, Janet. The family are keen to support the idea of an annual award and felt that the theme should be related to enterprise. The Principal is currently working with the Director of Marketing and Communications to develop this and it will be in place in the new academic year. During discussion with the family Janet confirmed that if she is in the country she would be happy to present the award.

HMI visit – this will be covered in the main agenda.

A member asked whether the annual self-assessment report has now been published. The Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality confirmed that it has been published on the provider gateway and that copies of it were currently being printed along with the College destination report.

John McElroy joined the meeting at 4.15pm.

1902 Confirmation of Governor Appointments

The Clerk reported that elections had taken place to appoint both staff and student governors. Darren Heathcote had been re-elected Support Staff Governor, Catherine Dennis was re-elected Teaching Staff Governor, Mark Taylor was re-elected to 19+ Student Governor and Harry Gillis was elected 16-18 Student Governor.

The Board were asked to approve the election. All members agreed.

The Chair added that he would like the opportunity to meet with Harry Gillis to discuss his role as a Student Governor.

1903 Training Session – Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults

A presentation was delivered by the Support Staff Governor on the College's policies and procedures in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

It was confirmed that this training is delivered to all College staff.

The Director of Student Experience advised the group that the College has a statutory responsibility to safeguard anyone aged 16 or 17. For adults at risk the College currently has a duty of care, this will soon be changing to a statutory responsibility.

Governors were advised that 98% of students who complete the College's Initial Student Survey and Exit Student Survey feel safe in College. The 2% who responded that they did not feel safe were followed up. This is often due to the student pressing the wrong button during the survey or because the student has confused safeguarding with health and safety.

A document was circulated outlining the recent duty guidance published relation to the Prevent strategy. A date for commencement of the duty has not yet been confirmed. It was confirmed that effective relationships with Counter-Terrorism co-ordinators have been in place since 2011. The Support Staff Governor is a member of the Gateshead Prevent Group. Links are available on the College website on how to report an issue.

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The Director of Student Experience informed the group that he currently sits on both the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Child Exploitation Group.

It was confirmed that the cycle for Safeguarding refresher training had recently been reduced to 1 year rather than 3 years following feedback from a critical friend visit. 21 members of staff have undertaken Designated Senior Person training to ensure that the College are able to respond to safeguarding issues.

It was highlighted that the Director of Student Experience discussed all issues relating to safeguarding with the Principal and Director of People and Organisation Development. The Principal would share this with the Board where appropriate.

The Principal added that the session was more about raising the awareness of Governors in relation to safeguarding. Governors should feel confident that the College has appropriately trained staff in place, detailed policies and procedures and close links with local partners including the Police. A detailed DBS register is in place and can be checked.

The Governor with specific responsibilities linked to safeguarding advised that he attends a termly safeguarding meeting. The focus of these meetings is to ensure that staff are trained appropriately and to question student feedback. Satisfactory answers are always given. Information is shared during the meetings in relation to specific cases where appropriate. The cases are anonymised to ensure confidentiality in relation to the individual students. The Governor is confident in the College's management of safeguarding.

Governors were advised that if anyone has any questions in relation to the presentation these can be sent to the Director of Student Experience or Support Staff Governor.

The Principal added that safeguarding will have a higher priority in the new Ofsted framework and a judgement will be made in relation to this.

The Teaching Staff Governor highlighted that the College also has rigorous processes in place for students. Where students are required to go on placements which would require working with children or vulnerable adults they go through similar processes to a member of staff.

1904 Principal's Report

The report was presented by the Principal.

The Principal highlighted the issues relating to Skills Funding – this will be discussed further at the Board Strategy Day. The overall reduction to the adult skills budget is 24% - this is challenging but not a great surprise. EFA funding allocation is also smaller as expected. The College will look to appeal this.

Changes to Ofsted Common Inspection Framework have been announced and will be effective from September 2015. Key changes include the removal of grades for Subject Sector Areas, feedback of grades following observations and a three year cycle for colleges graded as good. Ofsted will also cover compliance with the recent Prevent duty guidelines. It was reported that the College are already ahead of the actions required in the duty guidance.

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The Principal added that their report shows the variety of activities currently undertaken by students. The report shows that Gateshead College students are doing great things. Excellent feedback was received following the recent Enterprise Conference which was attended by around 100 students. The report shows how highly motivated students are.

The Principal gave an overview of some of the external events attended recently on behalf of Gateshead College including a CBI lunch at the House of Commons.

A member asked if it was felt that Governors have done enough in relation to the Prevent duty. It was confirmed that an additional briefing will be delivered as part of the Board Strategy Day. The Principal felt that enough has been done but these additional actions show the College going above and beyond the requirements of the duty. The Director of Student Experience reported that a College Prevent Group has been established and will be meeting for the first time soon. Actions agreed by this group will be shared with the Governors.

The Principal circulated a copy of the letter received following the recent HMI Support & Challenge visit. The visit acknowledged a marked improvement. Any inspection will now take place after the Easter break. Governors will be asked to come into the College to meet with the inspection team as part of this.

The Teaching Staff Governor raised a concern relating to staff confidence in preparing for inspection. There is a view that confidence has taken a dip recently and whilst staff felt confident previously this appears to have changed in recent months. It is felt that there is a panic situation in staffrooms. The Chair asked that the Executive Team take this feedback on board and take any necessary actions. The Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality advised that he is currently visiting curriculum teams and will look to pick this up as part of the visits.

The report was noted.

1905 Presentation of KPIs for each quadrant

The report and the record of discussion 'are closed to the public' until such time as they are no longer commercially sensitive

John McElroy left the meeting at 5.10pm.

1906 Governance Sub-Group Updates

The Clerk presented the report.

It was confirmed that all papers have been presented to the Governance Sub-Group.

The Chair advised that he was comfortable with the approval of the report. The group were asked if anyone had any questions in relation to these proposals. The Support Staff Governor asked how the Induction of Governors will work for Student Governors. It was requested that the Support Staff Governor and Director of Student Experience look at the appropriateness of this.

The group confirmed approval subject to review of induction process for Student Governors.

1907 Update on Gazelle - CONFIDENTIAL

The report and the record of discussion 'are closed to the public' until such time as they are no longer commercially sensitive

1908 Awareness Raising for Governors in English & Maths

The Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality circulated a survey to Governors and the Executive Team seeking their views on how to develop learners' English and maths skills.

A video available through emCETT was played to raise Governors awareness of the development of maths and English. Governors were also directed to the emCETT website which has lots of useful information available.

It was highlighted that 40% of children leave school without a GCSE (A-C grade) in maths and English. ¼ of adults in the UK have the same level of maths and English as a 10 year old. The UK is currently 22nd in a list of 24 developed countries in terms of maths and English development. The grading system for GCSE maths is scheduled to change soon.

The Chair added that he found the video very thought provoking.

It was confirmed that the maths and English strategy will be re-launched after Easter. New resources are currently in production to help promote delivery. The College is working to ensure that they have a highly trained workforce. Golden Hello's and other incentives are in place to stabilise the organisation and recruit the best staff. The key factor in this is ensuring that students understand the value of maths and English.

A member added that the key messages to students need to be emphasised by all staff. The Principal responded that the key message is constantly reinforced to students.

The Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality reported that overall results for maths and English are good and attendance rates are not of concern.

Discussions relating to maths and English will be continued at the Board Strategy Day.

1909 Franchised Provision

The report was presented by the Director of Finance.

It was reported that activity with some partners has been discontinued on the grounds of quality and to reduce risk. The College is continuing to work with 9 current partners and 4 new partners have been added. A new manager has been appointed to oversee franchised work and is making great progress. It was highlighted that most subcontracted work is in relation to adult delivery.

The report was noted.

1910 Performance Indicators to Drive Performance Improvement

The Chair explained that the data in the subsequent presentation is used to help drive improvement. The Chair is very impressed with the work undertaken to date and that the data is presented in a meaningful way. One focus for the data is value-added. Performance reviews are scheduled on a weekly basis and underpin everything. Activities are now being benchmarked against other organisations and nationally. This data will help to informed strategic decisions.

The Strategy Manager: Quality & Performance delivered a presentation outlining the performance indicators. The group was advised that there is a whole college approach to this and it goes through all levels of the organisation including learners. The data is helping to find tune our performance and ensure that the College continues to raise the bar. The strategy was implemented 2 years ago with the introduction of weekly performance review meetings. Targets are set and revisited as part of these meetings.

The data presented shows overall college performance against other FE colleges and course performance, by SSA, in comparison to other local colleges. Data within the presentation is from 2012/13 as this is what the College are able to benchmark against.

A member asked if the data for other colleges is easily accessible. It was confirmed that this is accessible. The College have become much better at interpreting the data available and changing the data into information that can be used to support decisions.

An overview was given of the data used to calculate value-added scores. The current data for BTEC diplomas shows a positive picture. Individual student data is updated continuously.

The Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality added that data can also be used to identify any issues and allocate appropriate support from the Retention and Achievement Team.

The Chair commented that the important thing is that the College understands the data.

A member suggested using some of the individual student success stories identified through this process to promote Gateshead College to prospective new students.

The Principal confirmed that data is tracked and measured on a weekly basis.

A member asked if there is also a weekly opportunity for staff to speak to students in relation to reviewing their performance. It was confirmed that this is tracked through tutorial and can also be done remotely through OnTrack.

The Strategy Manager: Quality & Performance added that the data is also measured against national rates.

The Principal reported that the data is significantly better than 2013/14. Governors should have confidence in stating to Ofsted that the in-year position is much improved.

A member asked if it is possible to compare the data on a local level. It was confirmed that high grade data is not available but you can view other data on the data dashboard for competitors.

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The Chair commented that the data is extremely powerful in underpinning strategic decisions. The data will also support the Board in their decision making.

A member suggested working with other local agencies to see if it is possible to collate demographical data.

The Chair thanked the Strategy Manager: Quality & Performance for the work that has gone into making the data presentable and understandable.

1911 Any Other Business

There was none.

1912 Date of next meeting

Friday 17 April 2015 at 9.00am

Board Strategy Day at Hilton Newcastle Gateshead

1913 Chair's Review of Business

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and participation in the meeting. The Principal's Report was a great round up of current activity. Good feedback was received from the Teaching Staff Governor in relation to staff confidence. The Support Staff Governor was thanked for delivering training relating to Safeguarding and Prevent.