

QUEEN ELIZABETH SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the College Corporation Thursday 28th September 2017

Present: Mr C Wiper, Chair
Mr J Deane
Mr T Fisher, Principal
Miss I Joyce
Mr C Kipling
Prof L Oglesby
Mrs J Pan
Mr S Regan
Mr D Warman

Apologies: Mr I Clyde
Mr P Davison
Mr S Heath
Mrs J Hillyard
Mr A Teague
Mr A Wilson

In attendance: Mr M Baker
Mrs L Bates
Mr S Hargrove
Dr S Hunnisett
Mr L Job
Mr S Dowson, Clerk

68/17 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

69/17 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.

70/17 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th June 2017 were **agreed** by the Board and **approved** for signing by the Chair.

71/17 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

72/17 Governor training, Progress Tutors

Mr Job introduced the Governor training topic, 'Progress Tutors and tutorials'.

Mr Job explained that twelve Progress Tutors had been appointed this academic year to take responsibility for tutoring from the teachers to provide a much better standard and quality of tutoring and to enable teachers to concentrate solely on teaching. Five of the Progress Tutors were new to the College and seven had been previously employed by the College in various roles. All Progress Tutors had a sound background in education and had received thorough training before the start of term. Each Progress Tutor was responsible for around 200 students.

The role of the Progress Tutors is to:

- Improve achievement/progress
- Improve attendance
- Liaise with teachers, parents and Principal Tutors
- Set actions with students
- Support progression applications

Mr Job said the role was proving to be an interesting and enjoyable one.

Under the new arrangements students meet with their tutors on two timetabled progress tutorials each week. During the meetings students do academic work, have individual discussions with their tutors and deal with whole college matters, for example safeguarding.

Mr Job introduced the Governors to the bespoke software Voyager and gave an overview of the headings, for example:

- 'Study Log', which is populated by tutors and teachers
- 'One to one discussions' where more in-depth conversations are recorded.
- 'Agreements' with students, which aims to ensure students who need additional support are clear what is required of them.

All of the above sections include actions for students to complete.

Mr Job explained that Progress Tutors performance was managed by SMG and their appraisals will examine attendance, value added and retention of the students each progress tutor is responsible for as Key Performance Indicators.

In reply to a question from Mr Deane, Mr Job explained that parents were not able to view Voyager directly but reports for parents were being developed.

In reply to a question from the Chair, Miss Joyce said that she thought the new system of Progress Tutors was a significant improvement.

73/17 Letter to MPs and reply from Minister

Mr Fisher highlighted the reply from Rt Hon Anne Milton MP, Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills and Minister for Women which suggested that there was

evidence to support the department's decision to cut funding for post 16 education. Mr Fisher said he and other post 16 education providers despaired at the minister's logic.

74/17 Examination results: Whole College Summary

Dr Hunnisett said that this year's results were the best yet. The A Level ALPS score had improved from 4 in 2015-2016 to 3 in 2016-2017. This year's students were the first to graduate on the new reformed A levels. Dr Hunnisett said that the reformed subjects had done particularly well. A level high grades at QE were 4% above National Average. Although there were fewer AS levels due to the reforms the pass rate and high grades had improved at AS level too and the ALPS score had improved from 4 in 2015-2016 to 2 in 2016-2017 which exceeded the predicted ALPS target of 3 by a whole grade.

Dr Hunnisett explained that the increase in high grades was particularly marked in the applied general courses which had replaced applied A level courses and these results were not included in the ALPS scores.

Mr Deane asked how this success was being communicated to parents. Mr Fisher replied that the charts distributed at the meeting were difficult for parents to follow but parents were provided with an overview of the results.

75/17 Examination results: Success Rates

The Chair congratulated all students and staff on this year's excellent results.

76/17 Subject Performance Data

The Governors considered each subject in turn. Dr Hunnisett highlighted the subjects that had done particularly well and those which were causing concern and had which been discussed in detail at the recent Curriculum and Standards Committee the minutes of which would be covered later in today's agenda.

77/17 Enrolments Report by school

Mr Fisher said that this year's enrolments of 1,026 students exceeded the target. The biggest increase was in pupils from non-partner schools which was the result of the hard work put in by a number of staff to maintain and develop links.

The overall number of pupils in Darlington partner schools was down due to the demographic dip but QE was recruiting an increased proportion of this smaller number.

The Chair asked how QE targeted individual schools, particularly those with a sixth form, for example Richmond School.

Mr Job said that modern social media enabled QE to target certain age groups and post codes.

The Governors considered some of the feeder schools in turn. Mr Fisher explained that the changes in numbers of pupils from each school could vary from year to year due to a number of factors. For example low pupil numbers, an unexpected fall in results meaning that fewer pupils from that school qualified to attend QE and the introduction of new competition, for example UTC.

Mr Fisher emphasised that proactive recruitment was essential to maintain future numbers at QE and there could be no easing off of effort. It was very important to continue to demonstrate the benefits of the QE experience.

Mrs Bates said during a recent visit to Ian Ramsey School in Stockton it had been very pleasing to see that 11 of their top 18 students had come to QE.

78/17 Whole college self-assessment report (SAR) 2017 (draft)

Mr Fisher explained that the SAR was still a 'work in progress'. The document was much slimmer now and aimed to capture some of the key views of the SMG and to be very honest and self-critical about what needed to be done to improve and achieve outstanding.

Dr Hunnisett highlighted that actions taken, including a strong focus on achievement and supporting students, had resulted in many subjects moving from a negative to a positive Value Added score. The overall Value Added score for the college has changed from -0.13 in 2014 to +0.14 in 2017.

Mr Fisher said there was still plenty to do to get the College to a position where it is undeniably, 'outstanding'.

The Governors **accepted** this version of the Whole College self-assessment report as an early draft.

79/17 Whole College Quality Improvement Plan 2016-2017: evaluation

Mr Fisher explained that the whole college quality improvement plan flowed from the whole college self-assessment report. The quality improvement plan presented at the meeting was essentially last years and was the story behind this year's success. The report aimed to capture the impact of the various elements of the plan.

This year's Quality Improvement Plan would be written once the College self-assessment had been completed in about two weeks' time.

The Governors **accepted** the evaluation of the 2016-17 Whole College Quality Improvement Plan.

80/17 Strategic (Three Year) Development Plan 2014-2017: Evaluation

Mr Fisher explained that the plan is a summary of the main strategic developments for the period and was updated each year.

The Governors **accepted** the evaluated Strategic (three year) development plan 2014-2017.

81/17 Strategic development plan 2017-2020 (draft)

Mr Fisher highlighted the four key priorities for QE in pursuit of the strategic objectives over the next three years.

- Achieve and maintain outstanding student progress

- Tailor study programmes and the curriculum to suit the needs and aspirations of students, universities and employers
- Manage College finances to ensure sustainability by planning robustly for demographic change and further real term funding cuts
- Explore and engage in partnerships and structural change where benefits are tangible and outweigh risks

The Governors considered the 23 measure identified to achieve the four key priorities

In answer to a question from Mrs Pan about help the help available for financially disadvantaged pupils Mr Baker explained that there were about 80 students identified on Voyager and formed part of the Progress Tutors training.

Mr Barker explained that the North East Collaborative Outreach Programme encouraged aspiration in pupils from poor post code areas and had recently been trying to evaluate the impact of the removal of financial support and grants.

Students from poor backgrounds were made aware of the funding available and encouraged to apply to universities with more generous financial support.

In reply to a question from the Chair about the impact of tuition fees Miss Joyce said that her generation had grown up with tuition fees and were not unduly concerned about the cost; it was the complicated application process which students found daunting.

Mr Job explained that the Progress Tutors and teaching staff were well aware of the issues and were working hard to debunk the myths surrounding progression to higher education.

The Governors **accepted** the draft Strategic Development Plan 2017-2020.

82/17 Curriculum and Standards Committee minutes (draft) – 14 September 2017

Professor Oglesby congratulated the Curriculum and Standards Committee on the thoroughness of their work which she found very reassuring.

Dr Hunnisett explained that the Committee had gone through each subject in detail to decide which should be in course support or on watch.

In answer to a challenge about the high number of subjects (11) in Course Support or On Watch, Mr Fisher explained that this was because the College had the resources to support subjects in this way not because this number of subjects were failing. Some subjects in Course Support have positive Value Added.

Dr Hunnisett pointed out the improvement over recent years of the subjects which had been in course support, which confirmed the effectiveness of the scheme, which was working and driving improvement. He explained that as the number of underachieving subjects has been reduced, the 'bar' for a subject to be given support has been raised.

Mr Kipling said that he found the narrative in the minutes of the change and improvement very helpful for Governors and congratulated the Committee on its top quality work.

The Governors **accepted** the draft Curriculum and Standards Committee minutes of 14th September 2017.

83/17 Governor Dashboard

Mr Hargrove introduced the Governors Dashboard and highlighted where Governors could find the data that had been discussed in today's meeting.

Mr Hargrove said the college had good student numbers and was in a strong financial position which would be discussed in detail at the next Finance and Resources Committee meeting on Monday 30th October.

84/17 Confidentiality

There were no confidential matters.

85/17 Date of next meeting

Thursday 16th November 2017