

**Minutes of the Corporation meeting 25th September 2019 5:30pm
 Cambridge Campus, Cambridge**

MINUTES

Present

Vernice Key [Chair]
 Heather Du Quesnay
 Mark Robertson
 Martin Doel
 Nichola Harrison
 Tim Arthur
 Barry Fyfield
 Michael Cole
 Paul Gaudin
 Andy Jennings
 Judith Coplowe
 Terry Butcher
 Theresa van Ruth
 Lewis Beddow

In attendance

Derek Sharp, Kate Da Costa, Laura Kerry, Corrin Hoyes

Clerk

Emily Baldwin

Section 1: Introduction		
1.1	Declarations of interest	Apologies were received from Raj Kumar, Jo Lancaster and Martin Clapson.
1.2	Apologies for absence	There were no declarations of interest that had not already been raised at previous Corporation meetings.
1.3	Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2019	The minutes of the meeting of 2 nd July 2019 were agreed as a true record of the meeting. All other actions were noted as complete.

1.4	Governor link scheme	<p>It was noted that governor link meetings were being set up for later in the term.</p> <p>M Dowse updated Governors on new safeguarding arrangements. M Dowse was now the designated lead for safeguarding.</p>
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Section 2: Strategic Matters

2.1	Principal's Report	<p>M Robertson introduced the Principal's Report.</p> <p>The Strategic Plan that was in place covered the period 2017-2020 and remained fit for purpose. The Strategic Implementation Plan was updated on an annual basis, and a new version had been attached for comment.</p> <p>Governors noted that additional KPIs would be introduced on the KPI dashboard to enable closer scrutiny of English and Maths. It was clarified that progress scores for Maths and English would be compared against a national average. Individual KPIs for the areas would be agreed at the respective Committees so a full dashboard was available for the December Corporation meeting.</p> <p>Governors noted that the new framework for Ofsted was now in place. Initial feedback was that the inspectors made considerable use of learner walks and interaction with staff and students.</p> <p><i>H Du Quesnay entered the meeting.</i></p> <p>B Fyfield asked whether the College was clear about what 'outstanding' meant to the College, as opposed to the Ofsted definition. While the College was looking to achieve an Ofsted outstanding grade, Governors needed to be clear if there were any tensions with what the College was aiming to achieve and Ofsted's definition of outstanding.</p> <p><i>J Coplowe entered the meeting.</i></p> <p>The Principal clarified that for CRC, outstanding meant that students were achieving the best that they possibly could, and the College was supporting local businesses appropriately. He acknowledged that achieving outstanding status was challenging for any college in the first year of a new framework. It was also more subjective than previous frameworks. C Hoyes said that the new framework seemed to be well aligned to the College's objectives. There was more reliance on student and staff satisfaction which was an important part of the College's Strategic Plan.</p> <p>H Du Quesnay reiterated that Ofsted judgements mattered to the professional community, parents, staff and students. Governors agreed that the College should retain the focus on achieving Ofsted outstanding. Staff Governors agreed that it was an important focus for staff who were well engaged in striving to achieve outstanding.</p> <p>Management were tasked to consider if there were any tensions between the College's plan and the new Ofsted framework, or any other College objectives that were not covered sufficiently by the framework.</p> <p>The Principal updated Governors on the English and Maths GCSE results. Although the actual number of students achieving high results remained stable, the percentage of students achieving high grades had fallen. This was in part due to more students sitting GCSE exams as opposed to functional skills. The timetabling issues at the start of the</p>
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year had also had a negative impact. Progress scores for Maths and English had improved. A number of changes had been put in place to ensure success rates improved for 2019/2020. These included:

- Classes linked to the department which meant tutors could more easily track attendance
- Shorter lessons
- Improved interaction between English and maths and vocational staff in team meetings
- Improved registration and timetabling processes
- Real-time attendance data so staff could react quickly if there were any issues

Governors challenged management on how they knew whether the new arrangements were making a difference. K Da Costa confirmed that attendance was up 10% in comparison to the same point last year. Learner walks had already taken place. Pro-Monitor was now configured to ensure performance for English and Maths was appropriately monitored. An induction survey for students had been carried out, which enabled issues to be identified early in the year. Self-assessment points had been scheduled to include English and Maths.

Governors asked for the English and Maths results to be broken down by campus for the next L&Q Committee meeting. It was noted that national comparators would not be available until March 2020.

A Jennings joined the meeting.

Governors asked whether the College was continuing to put more students through GCSE courses as opposed to functional skills. M Robertson said this was the case as it was felt in the best interests of the student. The Staff Governor agreed that students' skills set was more aligned with GCSEs and many felt that they had progressed even if they had not achieved the final high results. In the future, there would now be an option to take the course over two years which would be more appropriate for some students. There were no plans to introduce setting.

Governors queried whether there was full teaching capacity in English and Maths. K Da Costa confirmed this was the case but they were still aiming to recruit more teaching staff so that some class sizes could be reduced. In reply to a Governor query, she confirmed that the College did give guidance to students on exam technique. Governors agreed that there should be more focus on this in 2019/20.

Governors asked how far students were made aware of the economic advantages of passing Maths and English, given the importance to job applications. Management agreed this was an area that more could be done on and agreed to report back to Governors.

Governors reiterated the importance of student attendance to College improvement. The Principal confirmed that attendance was over 90% for all classes, which was an improvement on previous years. However, attendance for Maths was lower at 80%. Governors underlined the importance of ensuring the student body was engaged in promoting the importance of good attendance. Governors asked whether parents were contacted if students were not attending. It was confirmed that parents were contacted if non-attendance resulted in a student conduct meeting.

		<p>Governors asked for more information on attendance strategies including attendance data by department for the next L&Q committee meeting.</p> <p>M Robertson confirmed that security arrangements had been revised which was having a significant positive impact particularly on student behaviour. Badge compliance had improved.</p> <p>Governors noted that the financial results for 2018/19 were yet to be finalised but it was likely to be close to a break-even position.</p> <p>M Robertson reported the College had progressed to the next stage with 4 beacon awards.</p> <p>M Robertson was asked to set out his key areas of concern for 2019/2020 for the next Corporation meeting. It was noted that this was likely to include Maths and English and funding levels.</p> <p>Governors noted that PRC were undertaking due diligence with a view to merging with New College Stamford by 1st April 2020.</p> <p>The number of enrolments appeared to be relatively level at the Cambridge campus and were improved at Huntingdon where enrolments were up by 21% in comparison to the same time last year. This was in part due to improved relationships with schools. Governors agreed this was very reassuring and said that all staff should be congratulated for this improvement. Governors asked if there was any data on the drop-out rate. Management said their understanding was that there were fewer students leaving, in part due to the introduction of traineeships which students could transfer to.</p> <p>Governors said it was important to understand where the growth in Huntingdon came from. The College needed to understand if growth was from the immediate catchment area.</p> <p>Governors asked for a briefing note on traineeships. They agreed it might be appropriate to invite the Director of Commercial Operations to a future meeting.</p> <p>Governors <u>received</u> the report.</p>
2.2	Staff Survey	<p>L Kerry introduced the Staff Survey 2019.</p> <p>A staff survey had been undertaken in July 2019 to measure the levels of employee satisfaction, understand the distance travelled over the last 12 and 24 months and to inform future policy and priorities.</p> <p>The results were very pleasing and showed an increase in levels of agreement for all survey questions. Overall staff satisfaction has increased to 87%, with an increase of 10.1% in the last year.</p> <p>An analysis by campus identified very little difference in positive v negative variances.</p> <p>There had been a large increase in the view that managers were effective at making decisions.</p>

		<p>L Kerry drew attention to the areas where there was still some work to do. There were some concerns over the level of workload, although this had improved since the previous year. Governors stressed the importance of ensuring that action was taken to ensure managers gave appropriate feedback to their staff as this was seen as an area of weakness. It was noted that satisfaction varied across the departments, and results had been shared with the management in the departments.</p> <p>Governors questioned why the response rate had dropped. L Kerry said that timing had been an issue. Governors outlined that they expected the rate to return to 76% for the following year.</p> <p>Governors noted the considerable improvement in the survey results, and felt it was an achievement for the management team and staff at CRC.</p> <p>Governors asked for more information on staff/student ratios at the next L&Q meeting.</p>
2.3	Estates update - confidential	<p>D Sharp introduced the estates update.</p> <p>He drew attention to a number of developments.</p> <p>Wording removed for confidentiality reasons.</p>
2.4	ESFA letter to Governors and self-assessment	<p>The Clerk introduced the letter from the ESFA which had been sent to all Chairs. She explained the background to the Bourneville College Report and drew attention to the self-assessment report which had been carried out against the recommendations contained in the report. There had been no significant areas of concern, but the Financial Regulations would be reviewed in the current academic year as part of their three-year update cycle.</p> <p>The Search and Governance Committee would be looking at the AoC Remuneration Code and would be making a recommendation to the December Corporation on whether it should be adopted.</p> <p>The Audit and Risk Committee would be looking at the regularity self-assessment questionnaire which covered many of the same areas.</p> <p>It was noted that the Chair was responsible for signing of the Principal's expenses. The College had a limited number of corporate credit cards and spending was tightly monitored.</p> <p>Governors noted the report and the self-assessment. They asked that individual committees continued to look at any particular areas pertinent to their area.</p> <p>Governors suggested that the internal auditor looked at the self-assessment as part of their governance audit.</p>
Section 3: Matters Referred from Committees		
3.1	Matters for decision referred from the Search and	<p>N Harrison updated Governors on the main areas of discussion of the Search and Governance Committee, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee membership to remain unchanged until December 2019. There would be some changes at that point to take into account the change in Chair, and which

	Governance Committee	<p>will be subject to new governor recruitment and discussions with affected governors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no immediate skills gaps in the governing body, but the Governing body could benefit from representation from the voluntary sector. It would also consider co-opting a member onto the Audit and Risk Committee. Corporation members were invited to contact the Clerk if they knew of any suitable candidates from their personal contacts. • The Governor Code of Conduct, which was unchanged, and the Clerk’s self-assessment against the AOC Code of Governance. • Minor change to the Terms of Reference to take account of new minimum membership and contents of Governors’ Annual Report. • Governors’ Annual Report, which showed good progress against all areas, including strong Governor attendance of 83% and good use of the Governor Link Scheme. It was noted that the ‘Governance requirements’ target would be changed to green as all register of interests had been completed. • Governance Improvement Plan for 2019/2020. It was agreed that the target for governor attendance would be raised to 80%. Governors welcomed the new clearer guidance on the Governor Link scheme. <p>Committee members discussed whether a ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ grade should be given to Governance. It was noted that the merger and bringing together of the campuses had gone particularly smoothly. The Principal said in his opinion the board was the strongest he had ever had, and had the right level of challenge and support. It was agreed that the particularly grading should be discussed more fully at Corporation in December and should also link to the SAR process for Leadership and Management. It was agreed that it would also be informed by the forthcoming audit on governance.</p> <p>N Harrison raised some questions which had resulted from the Governor survey. Governors agreed that it was important for Governors to look at a longer-term plan for the College. There should be an opportunity to do so at the Awayday in January.</p> <p>Governors approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governance Annual Report for 2018/19, with all areas marked green • The proposed objectives and priorities for 2019/20, with a new target of 80% for attendance • The Terms of Reference for the Committee with minor changes
Section 4: Final matters		
4.1	Workplan	Governors agreed the proposed workplan for Corporation business.
4.2	Matters agreed between meetings	A Jennings reported that he had attended the panel interview for a new external auditor from 2019/2020. The recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee was to appoint Mazars, who were the College’s existing auditors and had secured the highest score in the process. A Governor questioned whether it was good practice to have the same

		<p>audit firm for two periods. A Jennings reported that partner rotation was within the recommended guidance so the Audit and Risk Committee were comfortable that this did not pose an issue.</p> <p>Governors noted the subcontracting approvals that had been agreed by the F&R Committee since the last Corporation meeting.</p> <p>D Sharp explained that Santander had now prepared the paperwork for a new overdraft facility for the College which had been agreed by the F&R Committee. Governors authorised V Key to sign the necessary paperwork. A separate minute was drafted for the necessary approvals for the overdraft.</p>
4.3	Self-assessment of Governors' performance	<p>Governors agreed that it had been an interesting discussion, and it was important that sufficient time had been focused on English and Maths improvements.</p> <p>M Doel suggested that the next meeting looking at the risk register in more depth. Governors agreed that all the risks had been covered in the course of the meeting, but it could be useful to orientate a future meeting around the risk register.</p>
4.4	Any other business	There was a confidential item which was minuted separately.

Summary of Actions

Actions			
Item	Action	Lead	Date
Corporation meeting 25 th September 2019			
2.1 Principal's Report	Management were tasked to consider if there were any tensions between the College's plan and the new Ofsted framework, or any other College objectives that were not covered sufficiently by the framework.	C Hoyes	Jan 2020
	Governors asked how far students were made aware of the economic advantages of passing Maths and English, given the importance to job applications. Management agreed this was an area that more could be done on and agreed to report back to Governors.	M Dowse	Dec 2019
	Governors asked for the English and Maths results to be broken down by campus for the next L&Q Committee meeting	K Da Costa	Nov 2019
	Governors asked for more information on attendance strategies including attendance data by department for the next L&Q committee meeting.	K Da Costa	Nov 2019
	M Robertson was asked to set out his key areas of concern for 2019/2020 for the next Corporation meeting. It was noted that this was likely to include Maths and English and funding levels.	M Robertson	Dec 2019

	<p>Governors said it was important to understand where the growth in Huntingdon came from. The College needed to understand if growth was from the immediate catchment area.</p> <p>Governors asked for a briefing note on traineeships.</p>	<p>M Dowse</p> <p>M Dowse</p>	<p>Dec 2019</p> <p>Dec 2019</p>
2.2 Staff Survey	Governors asked for more information on staff/student ratios at the next L&Q meeting.	K Da Costa	Nov 2019
2.4 ESFA letter	Governors suggested that the internal auditor looked at the self-assessment as part of their governance audit.	E Baldwin	Dec 2019

The meeting closed at 20:00.

Signed

Chair