

MOULTON COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 28th March 2019 at 9.30 am

- Present:** Mr D McVean (in the Chair), Ms A Turner, Mr A Clarkson,
Mr B Hansford, Mr L Howarth, Mrs P Hawkesford, Mr I James,
Mrs H King, Ms L Knapp, Mr C Matts, Mr T Neville and Mr A Thomson
- In attendance:** Mr G Davies, Mr D Aldridge, Miss A S Bruce, Mrs G M Hulley,
Mrs J Matthews and Mr M Simmons

Prior to the meeting, the Director of Curriculum and Quality Improvement delivered an interactive session entitled: Inspection Preparation – Board impact and Preparation for inspection.

The presentation, discussion and activities focussed on:

1. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the College.
2. Addressing weaknesses identified in the previous inspection and having an awareness of what Ofsted would be looking for.
3. Preparing the evidence.

Following the presentation and activities, the group agreed with the following key points that governors should note based on the presentation and discussions:

- It is very important to have a thorough understanding of the College's self-assessment report (SAR) and quality improvement plan (QIP).
- Based on the available data from the SAR, QIP, minutes of meetings, etc, the lead inspector will create a list of a number of themes that will be explored during the inspection. These will be detailed on a PIA form which will be sent to the College prior to the inspection. Governors should familiarise themselves with the information contained in the PIA form. Whoever is meeting Ofsted will need to read the PIA form to know exactly what the lead inspector has identified as key themes for the inspection. However, questions can be about other aspects that they find while on inspection.
- Inspectors want to know that government money is being spent to really help all learners make good progress and move on where they want. We know we have some problems and we should explain the measures that are being taken to make improvements. Students should behave well in lessons but it is the responsibility teachers to ensure that they are engaged and learning in lessons because staff are paid to manage learning. Show that we are carefully looking at the strategy for pastoral support and we can see how the pastoral support is helping learning. We are not spending money for social work but to educate people. Governors are aware that pastoral support officers are helping with the curriculum and therefore enabling learning as well as overcoming barriers to learning.
- We do need to know which areas are doing well and which are not. There is then the need to triangulate with those areas that are doing well and those that are not - the link governor scheme, informal discussions with staff or students will evidence this. Governors need to know which courses are having problems so we are challenging the Executive and ensuring they are focusing on improvement.
- There are some national problems, for example, Plumbing - we are kept informed of these problems but still we are seeking to improve our issues in this area.

- Attendance is an important factor in determining the final grade for PDBW. If students are not attending and therefore not being taught, governors need to say this is being challenged by governors.
- Where Leadership and Management are concerned, this is not an area that is judged in isolation and so has an impact of everything including classroom management. If teachers are saying they cannot manage classrooms that will come into the overall judgement for L&M. We need to show that we are aware that the L&M judgement is not just about the senior leaders and managers, and show that we are as concerned about management at every level in the college, including classroom management.
- Show that we are focusing what we are doing on ensuring that actions have a positive impact on what is happening to learners.

Copies of the PowerPoint slides and notes from the meeting were circulated to all governors after the meeting.

SECTION A – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

- 19/58 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)**
Apologies for absence were received from Mrs K Delamain-Blunt, Mr A Eastland and Mr M Wakeford.
- 19/59 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)**
Mr Neville declared an interest in agenda items 5, 9, 12 and 15. Mr Howarth declared an interest in agenda items 5, 7 and 12.
- 19/60 Minutes of previous meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)**
The minutes of the meeting held on the 28th February 2019 had been circulated previously and were approved as a true and accurate record.
- 19/61 Actions outstanding from the last meeting (Agenda item 4, Paper B)**
All outstanding actions were either on the agenda and subject to discussion at the meeting or progressing in line with agreed deadlines.

SECTION B – PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

- 19/62 Strategic Plan Performance Review: March 2019 (Agenda item 5, Paper C)**
The report was outlined and discussed. It provided the Corporation with an update on a range of actions that had been taken by the College in relation to each of the aims set out in the strategic plan 2016-22.

Governor questions:

- a. I'd like to know a little more about what might be an acceptable level of staff turnover and any further background to the current support staff turnover? *Turnover of teaching staff last year was worse than support staff. Where support staff are concerned for this year, we have had a couple of re-structures so there have been some redundancies. We have also seen a number of retirements in the year. Last benchmark data was 17% which we were above and we remain above. Although the number is rising, this is mainly through redundancies. As colleges shrink, staff numbers shrink so staff numbers are impacted on that as well. We have previously talked at length about the turnover of teaching staff last year. I am pleased to report that between December 2018 and February 2019 we have had a significant reduction in staff turnover compared to last year. I am giving a month by month breakdown as this level of detail is critical as a measure of the improvements to staff morale and culture.*

The Principal was thanked for her comprehensive report. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

SECTION C – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

19/63

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 26th March 2019 (Agenda item 6, Paper D)

The Chair of the TLA Committee outlined some key points of discussion from the meeting held earlier in the week. This included:

- **Quality Performance Health Check:** A quantitative and qualitative summary and analysis of in-year data for FE (Further Education), Apprenticeship and HE (Higher Education) performance. The RAG ratings were reported as generally amber for retention, achievement, HE retention and FE quality of TLA. Two areas were green. Attendance and Maths and English were both rated red. Members were informed of specific examples of in-year progress being made, for example with FE quality of TLA and FE retention.
- **Observation of TLA:** Details of key themes, areas of strength and areas to improve following formal lesson observations completed to date. A number of specific themes had been prioritised in CPD sessions and observation outcomes demonstrated the positive impact from the CPD. Areas where further work was required were also outlined.
- **In-year progress:** A range of key challenges that were being faced by the curriculum, some of the improvements made and further changes or developments that were underway. Examples of in-year progress included improvements with in-year retention rates especially for the first year Level 3 learners. There was positive movement in pass rates with a larger number of learners being successful in their exams and mock exams to date. A copy of this report would be circulated to the Corporation. (**Action 126** – Clerk)
- **Curriculum Plan:** The report explained the methodology used by the senior leadership team to prepare the curriculum plan for 2019-20. A contribution analysis would be completed using '4Cast' software. The overall content of the curriculum offer was also being reviewed and governors would be informed of any proposed changes prior to any final decisions.
- **Vice Chair:** Pauline Hawkesford was elected as Vice Chair of the Committee (proposed by David McVean, seconded by Ann Turner).

Following discussion, *it was agreed a copy of the minutes would be circulated to the Corporation once they were confirmed (Action 127 – Clerk); and, the report was noted*.

19/64

Quality Improvement Plan 2018-19 (Agenda item 7, Paper E)

The Corporation was reminded that this was a 'live' document and was subject to regular updates by staff from across the College. The report was also moderated by the senior leadership team at regular intervals. In response to a question around a number of deadlines which were imminent, the Corporation was informed that these were all on track. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

19/65

Safeguarding (Agenda item 8)

a) College report (Paper F)

The report was the first of a new format and now included some comparable data from the previous year. There had been a significant increase in the number of safeguarding concerns raised by students compared to the previous year. The nature of the concerns had also increased. Some examples of these concerns were shared with the Corporation. Further work was being completed on more specific reporting lines in relation to student numbers. The Chair thanked Jacky Matthews and her team for all the work they had been doing to put the College in a much stronger position to where it was previously. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

b) Governor Safeguarding Champion

Mr Hansford highlighted a number of points with the Corporation:

- The report was starting to show impact which was positive.
- Although concerned by the increased number of safeguarding concerns, the introduction of Pastoral Support Officers (PSOs) was welcomed.
- The Safeguarding reports provided a level of confidence to both the TLA Committee and the Corporation.
- Recognition was also given to the amount of work that had been completed by the College during the last 12 months. Personal thanks were extended to Jacky Matthews who had overall responsibility for this team.
- Mr Hansford expected to provide further validation of these findings following future link governor visits in May 2019.

Following discussion, *the report was received*.

19/66

Higher Education Strategic Position Paper (Agenda item 9, Paper G)

The Corporation was informed of the background to the Office for Students (OfS) requirements in relation to HE and in particular, the need for the development of an Access and Participation Plan (A&P Plan). It was now important to demonstrate better access to disadvantaged communities and to provide better progression and success. The Board was informed that one of the key requirements for the A&P Plan was that there was governor input and scrutiny. The A&P Plan should also be aligned to the College's Strategic Plan. It was agreed that a group of governors would be invited to join a task and finish group which would meet between now and the middle of June to help peer review and oversee the development of the College's A&P Plan (**Action 128** – Clerk). An important point raised by one governor emphasised the need to increase the number of HE students and how the College needed to consider alternative methods of recruiting students. This included the use of social media can be a powerful tool to promote the College; a benefits' package; and, developing a HE curriculum for part-time students which involved courses that lead to qualifications within a shorter time period. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

SECTION D – AUDIT

19/67

Minutes of the meeting held on the 4th March 2019 (Agenda item 10, Paper H)

The approved minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee had previously been circulated to the Corporation. The Chair of the Committee drew the Board's attention to:

- a. Three internal audit reports had been received. Safeguarding: Single Central Record had received a substantial assurance. Fundamental

Financial Controls had received a reasonable assurance. The Committee also received a follow up report on previous recommendations which received a reasonable assurance. This report would normally be considered at the July meeting and so progress to date was good.

- b. The Committee had held a discussion around risk management and the minutes included a recommendation for the F&R Committee and TLA Committee to consider relevant operational risks in their meetings. Progress would then be reported back to the Audit Committee who would continue to monitor risks.

Following discussion, *the report was received.*

SECTION E - FINANCE

19/68 Minutes of the meeting held on the 25th March 2019 (Agenda item 11, Paper I)

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held earlier in the week had previously been circulated to the Corporation. The Chair of the Committee drew the Board's attention to:

- a. The number of cash days in February and March 2019.
- b. The latest situation in relation to trade debtors and recommendations made by the Committee to address the current situation.
- c. Recommendations made by the Committee for certain improvements needed with some of the commercial enterprises.
- d. A request that the Committee had early sight of the 3-year financial plan. It had been agreed this would be presented to the next meeting in May 2019.
- e. The proposed changes to the Financial Regulations.
- f. A review of the Health and Safety Action Plan which had been presented for the Committee to monitor on a regular basis.
- g. A comprehensive HR report had been presented by the Director of HR. A detailed discussion had taken place and a number of improvements were reported on. The Corporation was informed that it could be assured that the College had made progress.
- h. The Committee had agreed that it would not reduce the number of meetings held throughout the year. The Finance and Resources Committee would continue to meet on a monthly basis.

Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

19/69 Annual Awards Ceremony (Agenda item 17)

The Corporation was informed that feedback had been gathered from students about improvements that could be made to this annual ceremony. As a result, a number of changes had been agreed to accommodate the student feedback. There would be 6, less formal events which would take place in the early evening. There would be no formal speeches. The Principal emphasised the importance of listening and responding to the student voice. Governors would be informed of dates and times in due course (**Action 128** – Clerk).

Ms A Turner left the meeting at 12.00 pm to attend the Food and Drink Innovation Centre official opening ceremony.

19/70 Management accounts (Agenda item 11, Paper J)

The full year forecast indicated an increase of £50k to the year-end deficit from the previous month (Period 6) compared to the approved Financial Plan. There were two main reasons for the adverse movement. The basic Maths

Premium awarded to the College was lower than expected. The Apprenticeship partnership with Abingdon and Witney College was also less than anticipated due to the ESFA not providing growth funding to take on further apprenticeships. Where the key performance indicators (KPIs) were concerned, members were informed that the current forecast indicated that the ESFA financial health score would be satisfactory at the 2019 financial year-end. The cash flow forecast confirmed that the College had adequate cash resources to continue into 2019-20. The revolving credit facility would be drawn down this month. A table had been included in the report showing progress with planned property disposals. Good progress had been made. The Board received an assurance that the budget for marketing had not been cut and the amount set aside for this was still committed. In the event of the need for any additional funds for marketing, every attempt would be made to reallocate funds from other areas to fund any proposals. The 3-year College budget and financial plan would be presented to the Board in due course. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

19/71

Financial regulations (Agenda item 12, Paper K)

A review of the Financial Regulations had been completed and they had been presented to the Finance and Resources (F&R) Committee earlier in the week for scrutiny. Minor amendments had been made in relation to:

- Typographical errors.
- Job titles and minor changes to wording for clarification purposes.
- The F&R Committee had recommended that the report should make reference to bank covenants and what had been negotiated with the bank.

Following discussion, *the Financial Regulations were approved*.

SECTION F – RESOURCES

19/72

Health and Safety Audit (Agenda item 13, Paper L)

In March 2018, an independent health and safety audit had been completed. The same organisation returned to the College in January 2019 to complete a follow up audit. The College Health and Safety Advisor had produced a post-audit action plan which was considered by the F&R Committee meeting held earlier in the week. A meeting of the Health and Safety Committee had taken place the previous week. The agenda had been reorganised so that the meeting started with items relating to culture followed by compliance items. The meeting had been positive with lots of discussion and sharing of practical ideas that would continue to support improvements in this area. The Committee included a number of staff Health and Safety champions. A student Health and Safety champion had also recently joined the group. The Deputy Principal confirmed that the Committee would continue to meet in perpetuity. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

19/73

Gender Pay Report (Agenda item 14, Paper M)

The report was outlined and discussed. The report was prepared to inform the Corporation Board of the College's position in response to the Gender Pay Gap reporting. The information would be published on the College website and a Government website. The report was based on a 'snapshot' date of 31st March 2018. The College had a mean Gender Pay Gap of 16.99%, a reduction of 1.26% compared to the previous year. The Board agreed with the HR Director's proposal to bring the submission date of the report forward in future years. This would help the Board to consider more timely data. In response to a question around how the findings of the report compare to colleges from the post-16 sector, it was not possible to draw a

comparison as the submission date for colleges was not yet due. Where next year's report was concerned, the College's data would demonstrate further improvements due to some changes in staffing. Following discussion, *the report was approved.*

19/74

Marketing: Creative Brief (Agenda item 15, Paper N)

The College had commissioned an external agency to complete a review of marketing. This commission would also include supporting the implementation of a new marketing strategy. The report included 6 key findings from the review which the Deputy Principal confirmed as items that the College Executive and Board were already familiar with. The Deputy Principal provided an update on the items. In relation to skillset, the College had advertised a vacancy for a digital marketing assistant. The closing date was yesterday and a healthy number of applications had been received. A job specification for a marketing manager had also been completed and would soon be advertised. College marketing campaigns had been revised and would be launched after Easter 2019. The marketing campaign would also address some of the points raised earlier in the Board meeting around attracting more students. The report would inform the development of a marketing plan and strategy which would be brought to the next Corporation meeting. Consideration should also be given to: online Google clicks; employers had not been mentioned but they were intrinsic to the College's business; and, alumni.

GOVERNANCE

19/75

Governor Development Day (Agenda item 16)

a) Notes of meeting (Paper O)

b) Risk appetite – summary of findings (Paper P)

c) Governor feedback (Paper Q)

The Board agreed that the recently Governor Development Day had been a great success. This was very much reflected in the feedback. It was also agreed that a similar event should be planned for later in the year once the newly recruited Principal had been appointed. The summary of findings from the risk appetite activity provided a good starting point in terms of expectations. This would be revisited once the budget had been set for next year. Following discussion, *the reports were noted.*

SECTION E – CLOSING ITEMS

19/75

Any other business (Agenda item 10)

There was no other business.

19/76

Date and time of next meeting (Agenda item 11)

Thursday, 9th May 2019 at 9.30 am in M6

Mr D Aldridge, Mr L Howarth, Mrs J Matthews and Mr M Simmons left the meeting.