

Corporation Board

Agreed

10 October 2024

Members Saboora Aqsa; Mirza Baig; Sarah Benjamin; Ian Comfort (Chair); Rachael Fisher; Laura Gladstone; Phillip Kerle; Carole Kitching; Sharon Lambert; Adrien Ong; Karen Redhead; Jon Roe; Chris Taylor

Attendees Maxine Deslandes (Director of Finance); Matt Fawcett (Deputy Principal, Planning, Partnerships & Projects); Anil Nagpal (Chief Operating Officer); Alex Rolfe (Interim Designated Safeguarding Lead); Sabeena Shah (Assistant Principal, Quality and Learner Experience); James Taylor (Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Quality); Richard Ward (Director of Governance)

1 Attendance

The Chair welcomed Saboora Aqsa and Mirza Baig, both of whom had been elected as student governors for the 2024/25 academic year.

Apologies had been received from Robin Ghurbhurun, Shawez Mir, Maddalaine Ansell and Kunal Parkash.

2 Declarations of interest

Phillip Kerle declared that he was a governor of Orbital South Colleges.

3 Minutes

***Resolved*, That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2024 be approved as a correct record.**

4 Safeguarding and Prevent update

The Assistant Principal, Quality and Learner Experience, Interim Designated Safeguarding Lead and Carole Kitching (Safeguarding Link Governor) gave a presentation covering:

- Changes made in the 2024 revision of Keeping Children Safe in Education;

- The College’s safeguarding arrangements and numbers of learners receiving targeted support from the College or external agencies; and
- The roles played by the Curriculum & Quality Committee and Safeguarding Link Governor in monitoring safeguarding and providing assurance to the Board.

The Board considered the College’s safeguarding annual report for 2023-24 as reviewed by the Curriculum & Quality Committee and discussed:

- The College’s arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable adults, given the learner demographics across the College;
- The role played by the Learner Experience team in taking a proactive approach to safeguarding through the tutorial programme; and
- The trends experienced by the College over the past year, and whether these were consistent with national and regional trends.

Resolved, That the following documents be approved:

- 1) **Safeguarding policy**
- 2) **Prevent strategy**

The Board noted that the Curriculum & Quality Committee had also recommended updated behaviour and assessment policies. Carole Kitching reported that the Committee had discussed both documents in detail, and had asked whether there was scope to streamline future versions of the assessment policy.

Resolved, That the following documents be approved:

- 1) **Assessment and verification policy**
- 2) **Behaviour for learning policy**

5 CEO update

The CEO/Principal reported that the College had met with representatives of the ESFA and FE Commissioner’s team for the purpose of the College’s ‘Annual Strategic Conversation’, which had been delayed as a result of the pandemic. The meeting had been combined with a meeting to review the College’s progress against its Post-Intervention Monitoring and Support Plan, which was due to run to the end of October. Representatives of the ESFA and FE Commissioner’s team had acknowledged the progress made by the College over the past year, and indicated that the College would exit the PIMS process on schedule, subject to confirmation that it had

retained 'Good' financial health. The CEO and Principal also reported on policy and sector updates, and plans for stakeholder and staff engagement throughout the year.

6 Learner outcomes

The Deputy Principal (Curriculum & Quality) reported that as of that morning, learner achievements for 2023/24 stood at 80.1% for 16-18 and 90.3% for adult learners. These figures were likely to shift upwards slightly over the next week prior to the submission of the final ILR data return. He noted that while the figures were improvements on the previous year, the College was examining outcomes in detail to identify areas for increased focus over 2024/25. The Board discussed:

- The relative level of prior achievement with which learners joined the College;
- The College's ambitions for increasing the proportion of learners achieving 'high grades'; and
- Arrangements for additional learning support for learners requiring extra assistance particularly in Maths and English.

7 Strategic and operational planning

The Deputy Principal (Planning, Partnerships and Projects) presented the College's new operational plan which had been produced following the Board's agreement of the College's new strategic plan at the previous meeting in July. The operational plan set out objectives under the four priority and three enabling areas, and was presented for Board members to give feedback on. The Board reviewed the draft plan and asked:

- That a single consolidated KPI dashboard be added to give a clear overview of performance over time;
- Whether the targets set in respect of stakeholder engagement within curriculum areas was realistic, given the movement achieved in the previous academic year; and
- How the target set in terms of the use of AI/AR/VR within teaching and learning would be achieved in a way which ensured that new technologies were used in ways which enhanced the learning experience.

8 Management accounts

The Chief Operating Officer spoke to the College's management accounts for the period ending July 2024. The year end accounts were being worked on in preparation for the external audit which would take place

later this month and to that end, changes to the reported position were possible. The College was reporting a small operating surplus of £21k, which was effectively a break-even position. This was presented as a draft position and remained subject to the finalisation and audit of the financial statements. The final position could also be affected by additional income which was being processed. The financial KPIs were positive, and the College's borrowing had dipped beneath 40%. The Chief Operating Officer reported that, as in 2022/23, the actuarial valuation of the LGPS was likely to come in significantly below the figure forecast in the budget.

The Board discussed the progress made by the College in identifying and realising efficiency savings as planned for in the Budget, noting that £380k had been identified against an initial target of £300k. The Finance & General Purposes Committee would monitor efficiencies as a standing item throughout the year.

9 Finance & General Purposes Committee (1 October)

Phillip Kerle reported that the Finance & General Purposes Committee had met on 1 October and, in addition to the management accounts and efficiency savings, had discussed progress on the College's Estates Strategy and also reviewed the annual HR report for 2023/24.

10 Funding report

The Deputy Principal (Curriculum & Quality) presented an update on the College's main funding streams, and drew the Board's attention to the fact that the College had reached 98% of its ESFA allocation, above the 97% threshold where funds could be clawed back. The College's enrolment data for the start of the year showed an overall positive position, with a slight decline in 16-18 learners but adult learners up significantly. The College was continuing to enrol and would do so throughout the year.

The Board commented positively on the clear presentation of enrolment data over recent years. The Board discussed the differences between the College's different funding streams and asked whether it was possible to increase delivery in areas where the College had not been able to meet local demand. The Deputy Principal responded that the College sought to maximise delivery but that the funding available to deliver courses was not open ended.

11 Estates update

The Chief Operating Officer presented an update on the College's Estates strategy. The College's budget for 2024/25 included approximately a fifth

of the funds required to progress the redevelopment of the Hammersmith site to the end of RIBA Stage 3, and the College was exploring ways in which the funding gap could be bridged. The College was in discussions with the Department for Education to assess the feasibility of providing temporary accommodation for another educational establishment in the area while its redevelopment project was carried out. The College had received interest in playing fields that it owned in Southall and would be considering the matter carefully. The Board discussed the prospects of advancing the redevelopment of Hammersmith & Fulham College in light of the funding gap.

12 Annual Health & Safety report

The Chief Operating Officer presented the annual health and safety report for 2023/24. The College had recorded a small increase in the number of accidents compared to the previous year at 124 compared to 104 in 2022/23. When the 'no injury' accidents were excluded, the numbers this year (75) were marginally up on last year's figure (72). The single RIDDOR incident mentioned at the May Board meeting had resulted in no further action from the Health & Safety Executive to date. The report presented details of the level of training completed by staff during 2023/24 which was 93%, compared to 95% in 2022/23. The College had undergone an advisory internal audit assignment on health and safety and was implementing eight recommendations, seven of which were low risk and one was assessed as medium risk.

The Board queried the process for monitoring and where necessary chasing the completion of mandatory training, including on health and safety. The Chief Operating Officer informed the Board that training was delivered through an online system and that the Director of Estates and Infrastructure wrote to managers copied to the College's HR team in cases where training had not been completed on time.

13 Curriculum & Quality Committee (24 September)

Carole Kitching gave a report on the latest meeting of the Curriculum & Quality Committee. The Committee had reviewed the College's Quality Improvement Plan, which showed that 17/18 (95%) of actions had been assessed as Green or Amber/Green. The one Amber action would be assessed on the basis of actual grades against target grades once all results had been collated.

On teaching, learning and assessment, the Committee had been informed that 167 observations of teaching were conducted during the last academic year, with 85.6% being classed as 'Good' or better. The

Committee discussed the distribution of teaching quality observed across levels of learning, age of learners and curriculum area. The Committee had also discussed the College's strengths and areas for improvement, in particular the importance of high expectations for learners' achievement and attendance.

The Committee had reviewed the findings of the end of year learner survey, which showed high levels of agreement for learners feeling safe, knowing what fundamental British values were and that teaching and learning was good or better. The Committee approved the College's learner voice framework for 2024/25, and noted the steps being taken to implement relevant recommendations made in the College's external governance review.

Finally, the Committee received an update on the College's stakeholder engagement activities, in particular the partnerships being developed through the College's contribution to the West London Retail Skills Hub at Westfield White City and the wider Local Skills Improvement Plan work.

14 Policy on the admission of non-members

Adrien Ong presented a policy on the admission of non-members, which had been recommended by the Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee. The Committee had developed the policy in light of the Board's commitment to its chosen code of governance and the Nolan principles.

Resolved, That the policy on the admission of non-members be approved.

15 Audit Committee (26 September)

Rachael Fisher reported that the Audit Committee had met on 26 September and received standing updates on the College's subcontracting and risk management arrangements. The assessment of strategic risks relating to the quality of educational provision and staff turnover had reduced from 'High' to 'Acceptable'.

The Committee had been informed that the College's business case to exceed the 25% cap on subcontracting had been approved by the ESFA, but that the College was currently subcontracting well within the taper that it had set as a result of more directly-provided courses.

The Committee had discussed internal audit assignments on income diversification (advisory - no score), GLA subcontracting (significant assurance) and health and safety (advisory - no score).

The Committee noted that the College's internal and external audit contracts would expire at the end of the year, and agreed in outline a timeline for the tender and appointment process. The formal appointment was expected to be made by the Board at its April meeting.

16 Any other business

The Chair noted that Sarah Benjamin's term as a staff governor came to an end the following week. He thanked Sarah for her contribution to the Board and the Curriculum & Quality Committee since October 2022 and noted that an election would take place in November.

The CEO/Principal drew the Board's attention to the learner vox pop videos which had been uploaded to the board portal shortly before the meeting. She encouraged all governors to review the short video in which learners reflected on their experience of enrolment, induction and aspirations for the year ahead.

The Board commented positively on the introduction of the College's new Board portal for distributing papers and holding committee meetings.

17 Next meeting

6.00 pm on Tuesday 10 December 2024.