

Wakefield College Corporation

Board of Governors

Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 April 2018

1 Present: Kieran Audsley, Paul Campbell (Chair), Julie Craig, Emma Elvin, Dmitry Fedotov, Eunice Ma, Andrew McConnell, Andy Wallhead, Sam Wright

Clerk to the Corporation

In attendance: Executive Director Finance and Resources, Executive Director Quality and Planning, Executive Director Human Resources and Organisational Development

Apologies: Karen Hands, Debbie Moss, Ian Parsons, Andrew Watts

The Chair welcomed Julie Craig to her first Board meeting. Brief introductions were made. The Chair also advised the membership of the very sad death of Tony Williams, who had recently resigned from the Board due to ill health.

2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 Andrew McConnell reported that:

- (i) in relation to Agenda Item 5(i) (Audit Committee Minutes), which highlighted a competition risk from Kirklees College in Dewsbury, he was a member of the Financial Recovery Task and Finish Group at Kirklees College, which was receiving formal intervention by the FE Commissioner;
- (ii) in relation to Agenda Item 10 (Tuition Fees 2018/19 and Higher Education Tuition Fees 2019/20), he was the Finance Director at the University of Huddersfield.

3 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 13 February 2018

3.1 An amendment to the section on Future Core Strategic Items was agreed.

Resolved

That, subject to one minor amendment as identified, the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2018 be approved.

4 Matters Arising

4.1 There were no Matters Arising that were not on the agenda for the meeting.

5 Minutes of the Committees of the Board:

5.1 Audit Committee – 13 March 2018

The competition risk posed by Kirklees College in Dewsbury was raised. It was noted that this development was being monitored, with an analysis taken of potential postcodes impacted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 13 March 2018 be noted.

5.2 Search Committee – 14 March 2018

The Clerk to the Corporation advised the Board of new guidance received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) clarifying that it was no longer appropriate for staff governors to be members of college audit committees.

Resolved

That the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 14 March 2018 be noted.

That Andrew Watts stand down from the Audit Committee with immediate effect.

That Dmitry Fedotov join the Audit Committee with immediate effect.

That the membership of the Audit Committee be reduced from five to four and the quorum be reduced from four to three.

6 Core Strategic Item: Strategic Approach to Pay and Benefits

6.1 The Executive Director Human Resource and Organisational Development gave a brief presentation that covered the following points:

- (i) the aim of the College's Pay and Benefits Strategy, which was to provide a total rewards package to attract, motivate, engage and retain top talent, which ultimately would deliver the best student outcomes;
- (ii) pay and benefits across the FE sector in 2018 were felt to be inflexible, fixed, poorly cost-controlled, not strongly linked to performance and rarely part of a coherent policy on total reward;
- (iii) challenges included:
 - limited resources to increase pay;
 - struggle to maintain affordable attraction, selection and engagement strategies;
 - difficulty retaining high-potential employees;
 - difficulty retaining specific skills;
 - perception that teachers' stress was on the increase;
 - comparing with different sectors market rates and benefit packages;
- (iv) pressures on the current pay framework included:
 - impact of recruitment and retention payment;

- impact of introduction of spot salaries for management and leadership roles;
 - living wage – increases well above inflation set to continue;
 - long teachers’ pay spine;
 - Apprenticeship pay below market rates;
- (v) performance related pay. The Executive Team had considered a number of issues including readiness, absence of good practice examples and a wider understanding of what motivates and concluded that it would not introduce a full performance related pay system;
- (vi) next steps included:
- involving staff to increase the range of flexible benefits available;
 - address support scale and apprentices;
 - create a formal framework for rewarding discretionary effort that exceeds expectations;
 - increase managers’ confidence linking progression with performance;
 - review and evaluate teaching and learning roles.

6.2 With the recent national deadline having passed for publishing results of any gender pay gap, this data was also presented. Based on 31 March 2017 data, the College reported a mean gender pay gap of 12.1% and a median gender pay gap of 21.9%, which was similar to other colleges in the region. College gender pay gap data was presented in quartiles. The College workforce overall comprised 67% female and 33% male. Pay quartile 1 included 77% female and 23% male employees. This quartile was largely responsible for the College’s overall gender pay gap due to a large number of predominantly part-time female employees at the lower end of the pay scale. By contrast, pay quartile 4 included 51% female and 49% male employees.

6.3 Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) the College needed to be able to motivate its high performing teachers lower down the pay scale who might see poorer performers at the top of the pay scale. One suggestion was that the College might consider giving double-increments to its highest performing teaching staff as was customary practice in the school sector;
- (ii) whether there were any problem areas in recruitment, especially for those potentially seeking second careers, where a good pension might be important. It was noted that any package that the College offered would need to be flexible enough to maximise the number of candidates;
- (iii) whether the College had considered offering private health consultations for its employees, which would benefit both the individual and the College through reduced waiting times and potentially less absence;
- (iv) that there was a trend for organisations to move to provide a comprehensive health and wellbeing package rather than simply providing monetary reward.

7 Critical Friend Review Feedback

7.1 The Chair reported the following:

- (i) the expanded role of the FE Commissioner, which included the use of ‘diagnostic assessments’ to ensure that fewer colleges fell into formal intervention;

- (ii) diagnostic assessments would be undertaken on colleges meeting certain criteria, including those with Ofsted grade 3 ('requires improvement') judgements. These were considered early interventions, and provided support to college governors and leadership in taking the right decisions to secure the future success of the institution;
- (iii) that Wakefield College had been selected for a diagnostic assessment on 23-24 May 2018.

7.2 The Principal commented that a Critical Friend Review had been undertaken in the week commencing 12 March to determine the distance travelled by the College in the year since its Ofsted inspection. Management felt that the College was making good progress but felt external validation would be valuable. Feedback from the Review was clear that good progress had been made. Andrew McConnell had attended feedback on leadership and management, while Karen Hands and Debbie Moss had attended the overall feedback.

7.3 Andrew McConnell reported that the Critical Review Team had:

- (i) praised the College's leadership and management for its swift action, positive trends and a tangible cultural change;
- (ii) uncovered nothing that management did not already know;
- (iii) confirmed that their lesson observation grades matched those determined by the College, providing external assurance that the College lesson observation process was sound;
- (iv) opined that the High Performance Team was having a positive impact in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA);
- (v) given feedback that, in terms of governance, Governors knew the College's strengths and weaknesses but could be better at asking the right questions;
- (vi) recommended that the Board establish 'Link Governors' in certain key areas and be more formally involved in the lesson observation process. The latter was an area in which Julie Craig had agreed to contribute.

7.4 The Chair proposed the following Governor leads in the identified key areas:

- (i) finance – Andrew McConnell and Ian Parsons;
- (ii) quality and teaching, learning and assessment – Andrew McConnell and Julie Craig;
- (iii) health and safety, equality and diversity and safeguarding – Paul Campbell plus another volunteer;
- (iv) student issues – Dmitry Fedotov and Karen Hands.

7.5 The Principal indicated that she and the Executive Director Quality and Planning would provide the Board with an in-year Self-Assessment Report at the Board meeting on 22 May. Governors would also receive more regular updates on safeguarding and health and safety.

7.6 The Executive Director Quality and Planning gave a presentation on the objectives, logistics and findings of the Critical Friend Review. Key findings included:

- (i) good progress had been made since inspection as a result of deliberate strategies developed and implemented by senior leaders;

- (ii) investment in infrastructure and resource was having a positive impact on TLA and student participation in work-placements;
- (iii) there was a significant majority of good or outstanding TLA;
- (iv) lesson observers made accurate judgements about the strengths and areas for improvement in lessons and graded accurately;
- (v) feedback on assessed work helped students to make good progress;
- (vi) staff were keen to be coached to improve their students' experience;
- (vii) achievement rates for Apprenticeships were good and assessors supported Apprentices well to make good progress;
- (viii) the Corporate Dashboard was a sophisticated and potentially powerful tool;
- (ix) the College's approach to integration of systems resulted in robust data;
- (x) students' behaviour and commitment to learning was good and Ready to Learn Zones were having a positive impact;
- (xi) students developed good employment skills;
- (xii) high needs students were well-integrated into mainstream provision;
- (xiii) vocational expertise of staff inspired and engaged students.

7.7 Areas for improvement included:

- (i) there was still a minority of TLA that was not yet good due to:
 - insufficient personalisation of learning based on students' starting points;
 - slow pace of lessons;
 - insufficient use of targets in and out of lessons to promote students' progress;
- (ii) use of targets and recording of interventions was under-developed in some areas;
- (iii) attendance and punctuality are too low;
- (iv) adult provision lacked strategic vision and oversight which resulted in inconsistency in the quality of provision and the student experience;
- (v) English and Maths skills development was not yet fully embedded in Apprenticeship delivery;
- (vi) Apprentices were unaware of when they will undertake English and Maths study and examinations.

The College had identified actions and was implementing these in response to all areas for improvement.

7.8 Additional actions being undertaken included:

- (i) the College was working with the Leadership and Management Adviser on a programme of coaching and preparation for inspection;
- (ii) the College had been invited to join a consortium of colleges who had all recently been through inspection or were expecting this, to share practice and experiences;
- (iii) the College was working with an Adviser to focus on improvements at the Castleford Campus;
- (iv) the College was preparing a mid-year SAR to submit to Ofsted by end of April;
- (v) Tracey Mace-Ackroyd (HMI and Lead Inspector in March 2017) would conduct a Support and Challenge visit on 22 May 2018.

7.9 Governors were pleased with the outcome of the Critical Friend Review, which demonstrated progress made since the last inspection. Those Governors present with identified lead responsibilities agreed to take these on. Meetings were requested to be arranged to ensure their knowledge development.

(i) Overview of Achievement Rates and Destination Data 2016/17

7.10 The Executive Director Quality and Planning commented that Governors should be fluent with the 16-18 positive variance information that demonstrated outstanding (+10% variance) performance.

Resolved

That the Overview of Achievement Rates and Destination Dates 2016/17 be noted.

(ii) Safeguarding Update 2017/18

7.11 It was reported that a Safeguarding Update would be provided at every Board meeting, but future iterations would be included within the Briefing Paper section.

Resolved

That the Safeguarding Update 2017/18 be noted.

(iii) Health and Safety Update 2017/18

7.12 It was reported that a Health and Safety Update would be provided at every Board meeting, but future iterations would be included within the Briefing Paper section.

Resolved

That the Health and Safety Update 2017/18 be noted.

8 College Performance:

(i) Corporate Dashboard

8.1 Key performance indicators within the four Strategic Objectives were considered in turn, including:

(i) student progress:

- a predicted pass rate of 92% (based on Professional Judgement 4) was higher than the College's target of 85% for this period, and compared with an actual pass rate of 90% in 2016/17;

(ii) retention:

- at 96% for 16-18 and 95% for 19+, this was up one percentage-point on the same point in the previous year for both age groups;

(iii) achievement rates:

- forecast achievement rates were based on a combination of PJ pass rate grades and current retention to forecast achievement;

- current forecast achievement rates for education and training provision were given a green RAG-rating and indicated improved performance for all ages and levels except adults at Level 3;
 - achievement rates for Apprenticeships were given an amber RAG-rating, because, although above national rates, they were below College targets;
- (iv) attendance:
- this was RAG-rated red and was below target and down on same point in the previous year, despite the interventions that had been put in place. For 16-18, current average attendance was 85% compared with 87% at the same point in 2016/17. For 19+, current average attendance was 83% for adults compared with 87% at the same time in 2016/17;
- (v) lesson observations:
- during the Spring term, 74% of lessons were judged to be good or better for progress against a target of 85%, with an amber RAG-rating given. However, this grade profile was distorted because lesson observations had been focussed on those staff receiving support for under-performance following a grade 3 observation;
- (vi) work placements:
- 59% of students considered ready had booked or completed a work placement. While this was above the College target of 50% by the end of March, the College had significant work to do to ensure all in-scope students undertake a work placement before the end of the year. There was an issue with student engagement and an amber RAG-rating had been given.

8.2 Governors considered the following issues:

- (i) that Governors needed to judge results (i.e. outputs rather than inputs) regarding College performance on attendance. Given that attendance remained poor despite all the interventions, Governors challenged whether the College should be doing something completely different. The Principal indicated that a very high proportion of Student Support Impact Group (SSIG) students that had low attendance still achieved their qualification. The Executive Director Quality and Planning commented that the College now needed to get robust destination data for these students. The Principal added that the College could exclude students with poor attendance, but this was not in line with its values;
- (ii) whether, if the College lost students to apprenticeships or work, the College could continue to deliver the curriculum in a different format (e.g. distance learning) to prevent students having to withdraw. It was noted that, where appropriate, the College did try to work with employers to get students to complete their qualifications before they moved on;
- (iii) how the College knew its professional judgements for achievement were accurate. It was noted that, as this was the first year of professional judgements, the College would not know their accuracy until the year end. However, as the year progressed there was an increasing bank of information (various assessments) on which the professional judgements were based;
- (iv) the frequency of lesson observation data. Although Governors had previously agreed termly updates, Governors requested an increase in the frequency of reporting to enable them to closely monitor the standard of TLA.

(v) February Finance Report

This minute is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

(vi) Progress Against the Quality Improvement Plan

8.5 The Executive Director Quality and Planning raised the following points:

- (i) that following the self-assessment of 2016/17, improvement actions had been added to the Post-Inspection Action Plan to form the Quality Improvement Plan;
- (ii) the report had been developed to include RAG ratings in order to show at-a-glance where there was a risk of not achieving the expected outcome or further intervention as required;
- (iii) of the eleven actions, five were RAG-rated green, meaning that good progress had been made and an improved year-end performance was forecast, five were RAG-rated amber and one RAG-rated red;
- (iv) attendance (RAG-rated red) remained stubbornly below College target despite numerous intervention strategies;
- (v) the quality of TLA (RAG-rated amber), which was not consistently high. There was now a significant proportion of good or better lessons but in some lesson differentiation was weak, the pace was slow and students did not make sufficient progress;
- (vi) achievements on functional skills and adult learning programmes (RAG-rated amber), where indications were that there would be improvements in these areas due to the impact of leadership strategies;
- (vii) that she was working on producing a report with less narrative.

9 Student Update

9.1 Kieran Audsley reported the following:

- (i) that he had met with the Acting Head of Student Experience and Engagement to discuss student attendance. Issues discussed included groups with poor attendance (e.g. age, ethnicity, course / subject area), the College's performance compared with other colleges, underlying reasons for poor attendance and the balance between support and sanction regarding attendance. Governors were already very familiar with these issues;
- (ii) the College counselling service. The Students' Union Welfare Officer had undertaken a small informal poll of students on their experiences with counselling at College. Of 10 students and one former student polled, almost half were not aware that counselling was available at the College. Other feedback received was that the counselling service was not well signposted, that there was a six months waiting time and that, in some instances, students preferred to access counselling privately. The results of the admittedly small survey suggested that the College might wish to consider how it could better promote its counselling service to students.

9.2 The Principal commented that many students were accessing counselling with some prioritised depending upon required action. She expressed disappointment that a high proportion surveyed did not know about this service. The Executive Director Quality and Planning commented that in the Student Survey some 90% of

students indicated that they knew how to access these services. The Chair commented that counselling ultimately fed into retention and attendance and Dmitry Fedotov in his new lead role on Student Issues might wish to explore this further.

10 Tuition Fees 2018/19 and Higher Education Fees 2019/20

10.1 The Executive Director Finance and Resources reported that:

- (i) funding guidance for 2018/19 was still awaited from the ESFA, but no changes were expected;
- (ii) Higher Education Tuition Fees for 2019/20 were not included in the report but would need to be considered at a subsequent meeting.

Resolved

That Tuition Fees 2018/19 be approved.

11 Subcontracting Update

This minute is confidential as it contains commercially sensitive information.

12 Draft Calendar of Meetings and Schedule of Business for 2018/19

Resolved

That the Draft Calendar of Meetings and Schedule of Business 2018/19 be approved.

13 Briefing Papers:

13.1 Equality and Diversity Annual Report and Data Pack

Resolved

That the Equality and Diversity Annual Report and Data Pack be noted.

13.2 Governor Attendance 2017/18

Resolved

That the Governor Attendance to date in 2017/18 (85%) be noted.

13.3 Written Resolution

Resolved

That the Written Resolution dated 29 March 2019 be noted.

13.4 Property Update

Resolved

That the Property Update be noted.

13.5 Use of the Seal of the Corporation

Resolved

That it be noted that there was no use of the Seal of the Corporation between 7 February and 10 April 2018.

14 Feedback from Governors Attending External of Development Sessions

14.1 The Chair reported that since the previous meeting, Governors had attended the following development sessions:

- (i) Apprenticeships Awards Evening, 5 March 2018 (Paul Campbell and Andrew Watts);
- (ii) Critical Friend Review Meeting, 14 March 2018 (Kieran Audsley, Paul Campbell, Dmitry Fedotov, Karen Hands, Andrew McConnell, Debbie Moss and Andrew Watts); Leadership and Management feedback, 16 March (Andrew McConnell); overall feedback, 29 March (Karen Hands, Debbie Moss and Sam Wright);
- (iii) FE Week Annual Apprenticeships Conference and Exhibition, 21-23 March 2018 (Paul Campbell, Andrew McConnell and Sam Wright);
- (iv) Governor Learning Walk (Construction), 17 April 2018 (Kieran Audsley, Julie Craig, Dmitry Fedotov and Andrew McConnell).

14.2 Feedback from the Governor Learning Walk on Construction was that the Curriculum Leader was clearly passionate about her work, was struggling with some teaching staff shortages and also under no illusions about improvements required to the quality of teaching and learning, with workshop teaching graded 'good', but teaching in the classroom graded 'requires improvement'.

Dmitry Fedotov left the meeting during this agenda item.

15 Review of Effectiveness of Meeting and Identification of Emerging Risk

15.1 No issues were raised under this agenda item.

16 Date of Next Scheduled Meeting – Tuesday 22 May 2018

Signed Date.....

Future Core Strategic Items

Item	Date
22 May 2018	In-Year Self-Assessment Report 2017/18
10 July 2018	Strategic Plan / Budget / Financial Plan / Risk Management
23 October 2018	Apprenticeships and Employer Engagement Update