

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Corporation held on Wednesday 26th February 2014, 6.00pm, The Conference Room, Prior Pursglove College

Present: Dr Gavens (Chair), Mrs Burton, Mrs Craster, Dr Dodds, Mr Downs, Mr Groves, Mr Loftus, Mr Mitchell, Dr Simpson, Mr Laverick

In Attendance: Mrs E Grove (Clerk), Mr R Grierson (Vice Principal), Mrs P Miller (Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Guidance), Ms A Shaffi (Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Skills), Mr J Zoryk (Assistant Principal, Resources)

Meeting quorate

56% attendance rate

Dr Gavens thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He welcomed Mr Downs and Mr Laverick to their first meeting of the full corporation.

1) **Apologies for Absence**

Mr Bell, Miss Bramley, Mrs Crombie, Mr Kay, Dr Lofthouse, Mr Parkins, Cllr Spencer, Mrs White

2) **Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the 27th January 2014**

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

3) **Matters Arising**

3.1) **Historic Data on Grade Profiles:** It was noted that the report had been due to go to the Standards and Strategy Committee next week. It had come to this meeting as a matter arising from the 27th January 2014 Corporation meeting.

Mrs Burton introduced the report and Mr Grierson expanded on the detail of the findings. Retention had improved but pass rates had dropped. It was explained that this might not solely be due to G scores; it could also be linked to grade boundaries.

Extensive discussion and challenge of the data followed. Governors did not consider that the wording in the report reflected the graphs which showed a downward four year trend. Clarification of the timescales was sought and it was noted that the years were year-end dates. Governors were reminded that the 2013 data had been presented in the autumn term and they had asked for the historic data which was contained within the report.

Mr Grierson was challenged again on the report. Governors pointed out that the downward trend was consistent over time. The change in entry criteria should improve success rates but the consistent downward trend indicates that there are more fundamental issues to be addressed. Mr Grierson confirmed this to be the case and reminded governors that teaching and learning, performance management and key skills were being addressed. Governors stressed the need to introduce numerical support at a much earlier stage next year. They were advised that assessments will be undertaken at enrolment and support will be in place from the beginning of the academic year.

Discussion moved to the specific matter of entry criteria for sciences. It was confirmed that some students had been accepted in previous years who did not have a B in science. Governors were also advised that most subjects had specific entry criteria. Entry criteria were used to determine not just which subjects could be taken but also how many.

Governors said they wanted to be able to understand the longer term plans that were in place to support specific subject areas. It was agreed that the sciences should be the focus of an agenda item at the next meeting. The enrolment policy should be a focus at the meeting after that. **Action.**

Governors asked for more data to be provided for next week's Standards and Strategy committee meeting covering success rates for subjects and taking out the 5.5s.

They also asked how the intake profile compares to other sixth form colleges and what proportion would be under 5.5 at an outstanding college. It was confirmed that information will be provided to the Standards and Strategy committee. **Action**

4) **Ofsted**

4.1) **Update from The Principal:** Mrs Burton reported that a response to the complaint had not been received from Ofsted by the due date of 31st January. She had sent in a second complaint, complaining about the lack of a response and requesting an apology. This complaint also focussed on the lack of transparency. She had received acknowledgement of this second complaint and will report to governors when a further response is received.

Governors were informed that four newspapers had covered the Ofsted report. Six communications had been received from parents; three of which were very supportive and three raising specific issues about their child. These were being followed up.

Students had been invited to raise any questions at two separate meetings. No students had attended.

Mrs Burton had spoken with some students subsequently and they were content.

Staff were being positive and professional in their discussions with students.

Mrs Burton was questioned as to whether social media was being monitored and it was confirmed that it was. Attention was drawn to some negative statements on twitter. A discussion followed and governors were informed that there were increased expectations being placed on students in terms of punctuality and work ethic. Mrs Burton said she would raise the matter at faculty briefings taking place during the week. It was also suggested that the student governors be asked for their views on how best to handle the matter. **Action**

Discussion moved on to the potential impact of the report on future students and recruitment. Mrs Burton advised that she had received supportive responses from Head Teachers. A suggestion was made that what teachers were saying within schools could be more of an issue. Mrs Burton went on to outline the schedule of planned open events and strategies for contacting year 11 pupils and the role of the Liaison Manager.

4.2) **Draft Post Inspection Action Plan:** Copies of the PIAP and associated documents, which had been emailed out earlier, were tabled.

Mrs Burton reported that the Education Funding Agency (EFA) would be in college on Thursday and Friday and a series of meetings had been arranged with key staff, the Chair of Governors and Chair of Standards and Strategy. Ofsted will be undertaking a monitoring visit in the week beginning 3rd March.

Mrs Burton was asked to take governors through the papers starting with one setting out the questions from the EFA and planned responses. A discussion followed. Governors did not consider that the responses addressed the questions or the issues of underperformance adequately. Mrs Burton advised that the document was an 'aide memoire' for SLT and was not for the EFA.

Governors raised further questions about the responses. They robustly challenged and questioned whether there was sufficient recognition in the document of the issues and the energy and enthusiasm needed to turn the situation round. An honest assessment of what has gone wrong was needed and how it was being tackled. SLT needed to show clearly that they had the capability to turn the situation round.

The role of the Assistant Principals and their involvement in debate at the meeting was queried at this point. Their involvement was to answer questions.

Discussion moved on to value added and the need to address this through teaching.

Governors were advised that retention rates had improved for AS students by 4% on this time last year. Greater forensic scrutiny of student data was taking place. There were concerns about A2 progress and careful monitoring was taking place. Governors recognised that the APs' Curriculum knew their areas in great detail. The Key

Assessment Grade (KAG) 3 data showed retention to be strong. The key issue was to ensure that pass rates improved and targeted support and challenge was taking place. Mr Loftus and Mr Laverick reported on their visit to the VM faculty where they had seen strong evidence of the use of data and monitoring of 'at risk' students. The amount of data available to staff had dramatically different to previous years.

Discussion returned to the EFA questions. Governors made suggestions to move some responses to higher positions. They stressed the need to focus on what is being done to put things right and not focus on excuses.

There had not been fast enough change. The new management structure will address issues but it had not started to operate effectively quickly enough. It was clear to governors that SLT and Managers were passionate and focussed and that there are very motivated energised staff who are putting in a lot of discretionary time.

Discussion moved on to the draft PIAP. Governors put forward suggestions where they considered further clarification was needed. They also asked for the items which focus on teaching and learning to be moved higher in the order. They questioned the use of the word 'restructure' in respect of changes in line management within SLT and suggested 'more vigorous monitoring' instead.

Discussion turned to 'stretch and challenge', value added, success rates and high grades. The need to ensure timeliness of actions was emphasised. Governors were informed that the draft PIAP will be reviewed by the EFA and Ofsted and that SLT was seeking assistance from other colleges.

Mrs Burton reported that staff consultation with the plan had already started.

Governors questioned whether the targets were achievable and noted that Ofsted did not consider them to be challenging enough. A discussion followed and it was **agreed** that 82% success rate for AS level this summer should be achievable.

Governors stated that SMART targets were needed with clearly identifiable milestones across the years. **Action**

Governors asked for 'impact' and 'progress' to be put into separate columns within the plan. **Action**

Governors recognised that the plan was a 'work in progress' and that it will need to be rigorously monitored and changed if there was evidence that strategies were not having sufficient effect.

5) **Governors' Working Group**

The group reported back on their meetings. The proposal to change the Corporation's structure with the aim to improve oversight, extend knowledge of teaching and learning and timeliness of reporting, was discussed.

Governors fully recognised that they needed to take on board the criticism from Ofsted and ensure more timely, rigorous challenge took place in respect of teaching and learning.

Support was given to moving to a different structure but concerns were expressed about the ability to scrutinise data in sufficient detail at full corporation level. It was recognised that more Corporation meetings would be needed.

After further discussion it was **agreed** that time should be set aside at the strategic planning conference to consider the matter further. In particular, discussion was needed on the size of the Corporation and time commitment. It was **agreed** that the last part of the strategic planning conference should be used for this purpose. Mrs Burton proposed that Mr Kewin, Deputy CEO of the Sixth Form Colleges' Association, be asked to stay for this part of the conference and this was welcomed.

6) **Governor Visits**

Dr Dodds and Dr Gavens had attended the Staff PD Day which had focussed on stretch and challenge.

Faculty liaison visits had taken place immediately prior to the meeting with a focus on the KAG3 outcomes. This will be the subject of discussion at the Standards and Strategy Committee meeting.

7) **Corporation Meetings**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 31st March 2014. Governors asked for information to be brought to the meeting on target grades. It was noted that KAG4 will have been completed by that date.

Mrs Grove was asked to set up additional Corporation meetings in May and June.

8) **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

9) **Publication of Documents**

It was agreed to publish the minutes of the meeting of 27th January 2014 and the Ofsted Report.

Mrs Burton, Mr Grierson, Mrs Miller and Ms Shaffi left the meeting at 8.35 pm prior to discussion of a confidential agenda item arising from the previous meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.