

RICHARD HUISH COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY MEETING

Monday 22nd January 2024 at 5.30pm
The Redwood Suite, Richard Huish College

MINUTES

Present: College Governing Body Members:

Barbara Barratt (Chair) – BB
Dave Tomaney (Vice Chair) - DT
Ian Brown – IB
Richard Hatcher - RH
David Snell - DS
Johanna Marks – JM
Nic Blunsum – NB
Hannah Curtis – HC
Lucy Halley – LH

In attendance:

Andrew Phillips
Helen Wells – Trust Governance Professional

Senior Leadership Team:

Emma Fielding – Principal
Becky Flower – Vice Principal: Student Support
Laurie Morgan – Director of Quality
Richard Jones – Careers/Exams Manager (*present for agenda item 3.4*)

Clerk:

Hannah Clunie

Apologies: Anna Gabriel and Richard Wood

Not present: Jasmine Fowler

Items marked with * had a paper previously circulated.

Item marked with + was a verbal update or presentation.

SECTION 1 – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The College Governing Body (CGB) wished to send their condolences to Anna Gabriel and were advised that flowers had been sent on behalf of all of the governors. Andrew Phillips introduced himself and was attending the meeting as an observer and would be joining as a parent governor. The CGB also welcomed Richard Jones who would be presenting agenda item 3.4.

1.2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made in connection to items on the agenda.

1.3 Minutes of previous meeting *Monday 18th September 2023

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record. Electronically signed by the Chair.

1.4 Matters arising report*

Governors in agreement that matters arising were scheduled for today's agenda or for future agendas.

SECTION 2 – ACADEMIC REPORTS

2.1 Data dashboard*

Governors noted the report.

The Principal and Director of Quality had worked with Roz Abbott, Trust Management Information Systems (MIS) Manager, to monitor data in readiness to present to governors.

There were currently 2099 funded number of students with a retention of 98%.

Q: What interventions do you have in terms of mental health to support students who are considering leaving?

A: The College have multiple support options in place for students, including drop ins, wellbeing enrichment and 3 members of wellbeing staff who are always on hand to support students when needed.

Governors noted that it was helpful to see leavers listed by school.

Attendance remained a challenge, in line with the national picture. Governors noted the further breakdown by provision. The College monitor persistent absence. The College feel strongly that tutor time is important and that this is reflected in attendance. Some students do not enjoy or wish to attend but overall feedback is positive.

Q: Do all sixth form colleges have tutor time?

A: No, it's not something all Colleges have built into their timetables, we all do things differently but at Huish we feel that this is important.

College monitoring points

Governors noted the report. The Principal advised there were 5 focused data points which included RAG rating, current working grades and mock grades. The Senior Leadership Team worked closely with course managers and subject teams and found that so far it was having a positive impact when reviewing student progress and picking up where there may have been discrepancies.

Governors asked Hannah Curtis (HC), staff governor, her interpretations so far. HC noted that it had been positive and useful and a good way to make comparisons between similar courses. It was more accessible in terms of course data and ALPS had also been useful, especially for student intervention.

The Chair advised that the data would be looked at more closely at the Quality Committee on 5th February.

Q: Are the College monitoring differences between RAG ratings for individual students?

A: Yes, progress tutors and the pastoral team were monitoring this and intervening when necessary and work closely with students to see where progress could be made.

Governors discussed the positive impact this data would have on being able to make future comparisons and how individual students are being supported by the College. Governors noted there would be no national comparisons or benchmarks for at least another 2 years due to the pandemic.

A governor questioned the impact this is having on staff and if it's onerous. HC, staff governor, responded that it could sometimes be difficult when you're measuring across different areas, but that it had been useful and was proving to be less work than previously.

2.2 Apprenticeship update* - Laurie Morgan, Director of Quality

Governors noted report.

An internal candidate had been selected for Accountancy Course Manager vacancy due to a member of staff retiring at the end of the year.

Two members of staff had left the Education Apprenticeship area in the autumn term but a new member of staff had been appointed and was going well.

The new Education Apprenticeship team would be focusing on a learner recruitment strategy.

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

3.1 Self-Assessment Report*

Governors noted report and were advised that the format would be reviewed this year and invited any suggestions from governors.

A governor commented that it would be useful to include more information on staffing and retention at the College as statistically both appeared strong and would be positive for the report. Overall, governors feel it is a useful document and a good oversight of where Richard Huish College currently is.

A governor suggested it may be good to include this report in the governor's induction pack as it's a good insight into the College.

ACTION CLERK

It was reported that Huish30 was working well and evolving, with a focus on consistency and quality. There had been positive feedback from students.

Lucy Halley, student governor, gave feedback on this and advised that it had become a lot clearer for students on how to manage and monitor this themselves.

Quality Improvement Plan* (QIP)

Governors noted the QIP updates.

The Principal informed governors that there had been various College benchmarking visits and the benefits this was having, including building relationships. Governors commented that it's really promising and encouraging to learn from other Colleges.

3.2 Admissions update*

Governors noted report.

The Vice Principal for Student Experience advised governors that there had been 1265 total applications to date. 1 to 1 meetings with potential students was going well and the College felt that although it was time consuming and required a lot of planning and work, it was unique to the College and important to students.

Governors questioned the 77 that had expressed an interest in the boarding house and if we would be able to accommodate this many students. Governors were advised that although Oak House would not be able to offer a placement to all who had expressed an interest, Oak House continues to be in a good position. There is some flexibility for multiple room use around applications for flexi-boarding arrangements. Priority is given however to full-time boarding.

Governors noted school liaison report.

3.3 Student survey / staff survey*

Governors commented on the overall positive result of the surveys.

The enrichment question had been included following suggestions from the student governors as it had also been a focus for them. The response was good and largely students were a lot clearer on information being shared or how to access information should they need to.

Students continued to give negative feedback about public transport, largely due to the buses. The college continue to work with Transport for Somerset but unfortunately it was limited what the College could do to change this.

The College had looked into incentivising for students to complete surveys, however there was a 75% turnout for Year 1 which was good.

The overall turnout for the staff survey was good, it was noted that there was more work to do around appraisal processes and the plans were in place to support this.

A governor questioned if the results were shared across Sixth Forms, the Principal stated that this could be an option to make comparisons.

Action – Principal to enquire about benchmarking results against another Sixth Form.

3.4 Destinations report/Careers update – Richard Jones

Governors noted report.

Governors were advised that the report was based on leavers from 2023. There had been very little fluctuation overall, however a slight dip was noticeable in students going directly to university from College, with the increase in students taking gap years largely due to financial reasons.

Q: Does this include all students who go straight to university or the ones who take a gap year as well?

A: Yes, we can see both results providing they apply via Huish which we encourage all students to do.

Q: Is it more challenging when more students are applying for gap years?

A: Parents sometimes get concerned about students applying for gap years, so we aim to ensure that we support students throughout this period.

The College were reviewing offers for disadvantaged students and the funding they would be eligible to receive.

The top 10 subjects remained consistent with previous years, the College were anticipating numbers for criminology to increase.

It was noted that students continue to largely stay in the South West for university, this was mainly due to financial reasons including travel expenses when travelling further afield.

Q: Is this a local cultural issue?

A: I think we are lucky with the local universities and the South West has a slightly lower higher education participation. We still encourage students and let them know about other universities and provide opportunities to visit. Some students do travel further afield but just in smaller numbers.

Governors noted that the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data was encouraging and a good reflection of the work the College does to prepare students for their move onto university.

There was a planned careers day scheduled for 28th June 'Careerfest'. There would be lots of employers and universities attending. Governors invited to attend this event.

The Chair thanked Richard for his report and for the work that his team do.

Richard left the meeting at 17.54pm.

SECTION 4 – GOVERNANCE

4.1 Safeguarding update*

Governors noted reports.

January meeting took place on 19th January with Matt Nolan, Emily Daly, Lara Blackmore, Barbara Barratt (Chair) and Ian Brown.

Ian Brown talked through the report. Governors discussed that the temporary solution regarding staff on call for Oak House should be reviewed and something else potentially put into place as it takes a considerable amount of time alongside their current job roles.

4.2 Policies for approval*

- Quality Committee Terms of Reference – Approved, to review annually/as necessary.
- Serious Breaches of Behaviour Policy – Approved
- Plagiarism and AI Policy – Governors agreed that it was largely about plagiarism opposed to Artificial Intelligence, due to this governors felt it should be renamed Plagiarism Policy. Approved subject to name change and to review in 12 months.

SECTION 5 – OTHER MATTERS

- The Chair advised that Richard Huish Trust Board minutes would now be included with CGB meeting papers for information.
- Governors advised that the Quality Committee had a meeting scheduled for 5th February and would give feedback at the CGB on 11th April.
- The College's Musical 'Bonnie and Clyde' had tickets available if governors wished to come and see it.
- Reminder 2023-24 meeting dates;
Thursday 11th April 2024
Monday 20th May 2024
Monday 1st July 2024

Meeting end 19.38pm

CLOSED SESSION – CONFIDENTIAL

Attended by the Chair, Vice Chair and members of the CGB. Members of the Senior Leadership Team, Staff and Student Governors were not present.

These minutes were approved by the College Governing Body and electronically signed by the Chair on Thursday 11th April 2024.

