

**MINUTES OF THE RICHARD HUISH COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY MEETING**

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 5.30pm**  
**The Redwood Suite, Richard Huish College**

**Present: College Governing Body Members:**

Barbara Barratt (Chair) – BB  
Dave Tomaney (Vice Chair) – DT  
Anna Gabriel - AG  
Richard Hatcher – RH  
Andrew Phillips - AP  
David Snell – DS  
Johanna Marks – JM  
Ian Brown – IB  
Hannah Curtis – HC  
Dickson Yiu – DY  
Jacob Peacock - JP

**Senior Leadership Team:**

Emma Fielding – Principal  
Laurie Morgan – Director of Quality  
Becky Flower – Vice Principal: Student Support  
Richard Anderson - Director of IT & Estates (*present for agenda items 1&2*)  
Roger Neale – Site Manager (*present for agenda items 1&2*)

**Clerk:**

Hannah Clunie

**Apologies:** Richard Wood

**Not present:** N/A

Items marked with \* had a paper previously circulated.

Item marked with + was a verbal update and/or presentation.

**SECTION 1 – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS**

**1.1 Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from Richard Wood. The Chair informed governors that Nic Blunsum had resigned his position as a governor as a result of work commitments. The College Governing Body (CGB) would review governor appointments at the start of the next academic year.

**1.2 Declarations of Interest**

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

**1.3 Minutes of the previous meeting \*Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.

**1.4 Matters Arising\***

Matters arising were on the agenda or scheduled for future meetings.

**SECTION 2 – ESTATES / HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**2.1 Sustainability Update\* - Director of IT & Estates**

Governors noted the report.

The principal advised that the College introduced an additional 7<sup>th</sup> value a few years ago, to ensure that the College would be committed and focused on its environmental reduction strategy and advised that the College was aiming for an 80% reduction by 2035. The College had completed the replacement of fluorescent lighting and more efficient windows and doors where possible. There were plans to plant a further 250 trees and to generate at least 15% of our energy through PV and replacing current vehicles with electric alternatives. The College continues to reduce paper use and printing.

The latest report shows the College had so far achieved a 17.7% decrease in energy and 23.6% decrease in emissions.

The College also had a Student Sustainability Society, which was supported by Biology/Earth Sciences staff in the College.

Governors were invited to join any meetings that take place once a term. The College was looking into the possibility of a Carbon Literacy qualification, which other Sixth Forms have implemented. The College was aiming to introduce this next year.

**Q: Where/how are the trees sourced and what is the cost?**

**A: From the Woodland Trust, who supply free trees for schools and colleges.**

The College continues to follow the Further Education Climate Action Roadmap. It was anticipated that by December 2024 the College would have achieved an 'emerging College' status and would begin the next stage of becoming an 'established College'.

Governors thanked Richard Anderson for the report.

## **2.2 Estates Update+ - Site Manager**

The Site Manager informed governors of various work that has taken place across the College site. This included;

- Ensuring the College is complaint in all areas of Health and Safety
- Tree surveys, of which remedial work has already been carried out
- Employed another member of staff to the Estates team
- Compliant CCTV signage across the site
- AGP fence around the sports pitch
- Fence behind Willow to further secure the site
- Compliant with correct waste disposal
- Boilers serviced and calibrated to ensure they are running efficiently
- Drainage repairs

The Site Manager informed governors that he was encouraging a change in culture with staff and students and wanted to better understand staff's responsibilities so that when an issue arises it could be prioritised accordingly. The Site manager informed governors that the Estates team were trying to be proactive with planned preventative maintenance and keeping a stock of frequently used common parts. The Estates team were also carrying out routine boiler checks.

A Site Safety and Community Liaison Officer had now been appointed with an aim of being a link between the College and the local community. So far there had been positive feedback from the community.

There had been a significant amount of work undertaken around the College grounds, including around the Willow building which as a result, had made more space for students and has become more of a communal area. A dedicated vaping area had also been introduced. The College had

also purchased new tables and chairs and protective flooring for the sports hall, in which estates staff had practiced setting up for events such as exams.

Governors thanked Roger for his in-depth report and wished to pass their thanks onto the entire estates team for their continued hard work across the College site and Oak House. The Principal and Vice Principal also echoed these comments and praised the team for their commitment and hard work.

### **2.3 Health and Safety Report\***

The Director of Quality informed governors he had now been appointed Health and Safety Lead for the College.

Governors were advised of the annual audit, inspection and fire review and the actions required as a result. One of the actions was to implement a process for the actions to be carried out. The principal, Director of IT and Estates and Director of Quality have now put a working structure into place which is working well so far. All high priority actions from the reports have been completed and during a recent Health and Safety inspection the College was commended for the positive steps made thus far.

There had also been a structural survey undertaken on a number of buildings which were given the all clear. The College had looked into solar panels on Redwood roof, but this was declined.

A governor questioned asbestos on site to which they were informed there is none on site that is high risk and where asbestos was present, the estates team were aware of its location.

The principal, Director of Quality, Director of IT and Estates and Site manager continue to meet every 2-3 weeks to ensure everything is moving forwards.

Governors requested an update in the Autumn term.

### ***ACTION CLERK/DIRECTOR OF QUALITY – AUTUMN TERM AGENDA ITEM***

*Roger and Richard left the meeting at 18.17pm.*

## **SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW**

### **3.1 Data Dashboard\***

Governors noted the report.

- **Attendance, retention, leavers**

Retention was looking positive which is forecast to have a positive financial impact for the College. Attendance has also been positive, which was reinforced when the Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA) attendance benchmark data was shared. Governors commented that this was brilliant to see.

A governor commented on disadvantaged students and their attendance at tutor group. The College don't receive data for disadvantaged students until January and by then it is usually too late as issues arrive shortly after students arrive in September. Some of these students had not attended at all in their first term, it's often a very small percentage of students that make a large impact on the data. Overall attendance is strong but the College was working closely to support students who have significant ongoing challenges. It was noted to consider more anecdotal data to support the data, which would give a better overall view.

### ***ACTION PRINCIPAL/VICE PRINCIPAL***

Q: Are teachers aware of students' mental health issues?

A: Occasionally, mental health issues can appear out of nowhere, whereas other students will approach staff and can then be supported by the pastoral team.

- **College Monitoring Points\***

Governors noted the report.

Quality Committee have looked at this in more depth. Quality Committee feedback paper was provided for governors for information.

The principal informed governors it has been beneficial to visit other College's as a way of making comparisons. The Director of Quality had also been attending webinars and would potentially present progress data in a slightly different way going forwards.

- **SFCA Attendance Benchmark Data\***

Governors noted report.

Senior team visited Callywith College and focused on disadvantaged students. The College recognise there is work to be done on retention and attendance of these students and are aware of retention issues with this group of students in comparison with their non-disadvantaged peers.

It was noted that the College was strong in terms of supporting disadvantaged students when they stay. The College was aiming to raise their aspirations and focus on progression and what they could achieve in the future.

The College was considering 'Aim higher' type programme for next year which appeared to be one of the most successful for students. The College was keen to focus on destinations, as most students tend to stay in the Southwest for university, rather than going further afield.

Q: How do you identify disadvantaged students?

A: We receive information from the Department of Education (DfE), which the DfE are provided with from respective schools based on looked after children and free school meals. We then look at students eligible for our bursary/free school meals. We are going to look at factoring in postcodes from September.

Q: Is there a stigma attached to those entitled to free school meals?

A: Not according to student focus groups, students can do it on their phones now which makes it more private.

The Chair thanked the Director of Quality for his reports.

### **3.2 End of Year Quality Improvement Plan Update (QIP)\***

Governors noted the QIP.

The principal advised that the College had made tremendous progress, especially around Huish30. Oracy had been exciting and a framework had now been implemented to work with going forwards. The principal would check with staff if podcasts could be shared with governors.

#### ***ACTION PRINCIPAL***

The principal shared the emerging priorities and themes for the next academic year;

- Student oracy
- Accuracy and effectiveness of assessment
- Sustainability

The principal advised that Artificial Intelligence (AI) was considered, however the College is not yet confident as a senior team to lead the rest of the College on such a large matter. The aim is to undertake some significant training and will likely be a priority for the whole College in a years' time when they hopefully have a more solid understanding.

Q: Is the college trying to encourage students with the use of AI?

A: We are trying to capture the possible uses. Two research projects have been carried out, we had assumed students knew more than they did but results showed the opposite and emphasised we'd had incorrect perceptions. We need to help students use it as a positive tool to enhance their learning. Plagiarism policy and use of AI in terms of assessment is something that we are on top of. We are consciously aware that AI is a difficult and constantly evolving, we need to educate students and staff whilst also being cautious.

Governors felt the QIP was very comprehensive, and it was encouraging to see.

### **3.3 Annual Complaints Review\***

Governors noted the report.

Q: Is it similar in comparison to previous years?

A: Yes, it is looking similar to previous years.

Governors discussed what defines a complaint. The Vice Principal advised that it needs to specifically include the word 'complaint'.

Overall, governors felt the data was reassuring and that the majority of complaints were handled quickly and resolved within 9 working days.

A governor questioned any grievances with staff. The Principal advised that a separate report could be given for this if governors requested it.

The Principal and Vice Principal informed governors that self-reflection had been helpful when recording complaints to see what the College could have done differently and how it can be improved going forwards.

Governors discussed the communication difficulties that arise with complaints and the different channels parents and students use to make a complaint, such as email/chatting with a member of staff/phone call and how parents/carers may not always be aware if the complaint has been dealt with and the matter closed. The Principal and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to discuss ways to ensure that students and parents feel that issues have been resolved and would welcome feedback.

#### ***ACTION PRINCIPAL/SLT***

### **3.4 Disadvantaged Students Review\***

Governors noted the report.

The Vice Principal advised that the key thing is communication. Bursary guidelines had changed a lot this year and the College want to ensure staff are aware of what is and isn't available. The College would like to focus on aspirations for this group of students and have already started taking them on university visits. The College is aiming to reinforce financial support for these students so they are aware of what is available to them.

There were still difficulties around the definition of disadvantaged and the data continues to be challenging to interpret. It was clear that students to remain at the College perform well. Packs of information were ready in advance for these students joining in September and staff have already commented that this was a positive step and already removing some of the barriers for these students.

Q: When you process applications for boarders at Oak House, pupils have to declare more information. Could this become part of the application for every student?

A: We do ask these questions on the application form, however students choose not to fill it in as it's not the same circumstances as choosing to board. Students can be reluctant to provide the information which is why its important we try and build a relationship with them.

Governors discussed the importance for continuing support these students.

### **3.5. Admissions Update\***

Governors noted the report.

1261 have firmly accepted their offers which gives the College a strong indication of how many students are intending to enrol.

Individual Advice and Guidance sessions (IAGs) have been excellent with 1445 carried out so far. It was also positive that 73 of the College's Level 2 students have applied for a Level 3.

SEND and Mental Health was higher than previous, and the College was having to dedicate more time and resources to put support in place for these students. This continues to be a challenge financially and logistically.

## **SECTION 4 – GOVERNANCE**

### **4.1 Governance Update\***

Governors noted the report.

Governors were advised that a Chair and Vice Chair would be re-elected in September.

Governors were advised that the Trust was discussing the possibility of a SEND Link Governor, which could be similarly structured to the Safeguarding Link Governor role.

### ***ACTION PRINCIPAL & CGB***

### **4.2 Student Executives Update\***

Student Governors Dickson Yiu and Jacob Peacock updated governors on the progress of the Student Executives throughout the year.

A governor commented on the ratio of A Level and Vocational students on the Student Executives Team, Jacob stated he feels as though he gets ample opportunity to share and answer questions and it was great to have such a diverse team.

Q: How have you found participating in staff interviews?

A: HR record questions if they are useful, sometimes its observation and other times we are able to ask questions. It's been a great opportunity to be involved.

Governors commented that the value added by students attending interviews should not be overlooked.

Student executives advised they would feedback to governors at a later date to inform them of further developments.

Governors discussed considering inviting other Student Executives to meet governors and talk about the progress made. Governors wished to pass thanks onto the Student Executive for their hard and valuable work across the College.

### **4.3 Safeguarding Update\***

Governors noted the reports.

Ian Brown talked governors through the report.

Anxiety and low mood continue to be recurring themes, the College benefits from a designated Safeguarding team. There would also be a Mental Health team from September to support these students.

Governors were informed that Keeping Children Safe in Education was to potentially be rewritten for 2025.

'Me vs my brain' pamphlet produced by the Safeguarding team. There had been an increase in diagnosed SEN students, this was largely as the systems were now in place for students to feel comfortable talking to staff.

The chair and governors thanked Ian and the Safeguarding team for their continued hard work. The Chair advised there was to be a review with the Trust to discuss the new safeguarding structure that has been in place over the last year.

## **SECTION 5 – POLICIES\***

Huish Fees Policy\*

Behaviour Policy\*

The above policies were approved by College Governing Body.

The Chair thanked the Principal for the teams hard work on the Behaviour Policy.

Trips Policy to be electronically circulated via the clerk.

### ***ACTION PRINCIPAL/CLERK***

## **SECTION 6 – OTHER MATTERS**

### **6.1 2024-25 Meeting Dates\***

Governors noted the proposed meeting dates for 2024-25. The first meeting of the academic year was scheduled to take place on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September at 5.30pm.

- Finance committee dates to be confirmed
- List of employer engagement links had been shared on the governor Teams folder. Governors commented on the comprehensive list. Governors encouraged if they know anyone or any organisations who would like to be involved to forward onto the clerk.
- A governor commented on the Smartlog safeguarding training and that it would be beneficial if it came with a trigger warning beforehand.

*Meeting end 19.35pm.*

***These minutes were approved by the College Governing Body and electronically signed by the Chair on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024.***

