

**Minutes of Corporation Workshop**  
**Held on Tuesday 10 September 2024 at 4.10pm**  
**The Source, All Saints Building, Worcester**

	<p><b>Present:</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>David Ash (Chair of Corporation)</p> <p>Chris Hallam (Vice Chair)</p> <p>Michelle Dowse (Principal)</p> <p>Jane Britton (Governor)</p> <p>Gaynor Cheshire (Governor)</p> <p>Phil Colledge (Governor)</p> <p>Vicki Davies (Governor)</p> <p>Adam Hall (Governor)</p> <p>Tony King (Governor)</p> <p>Steve Stanier (Governor)</p> <p>Paul Hine (Staff Governor)</p> <p>Julie Hurlston (Staff Governor)</p> <p>Donna Gibson (Clerk)</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Simon Kibble (Deputy Principal)</p> <p>Matt Gower (Vice Principal, Quality)</p> <p>Mo Horan (Vice Principal Apprenticeships, Partnerships &amp; Skills)</p> <p>Peter Robinson (Vice Principal, HE, Adult &amp; Curriculum Development)</p> <p>Cherie Clements (Vice Principal, Finance &amp; Corporate Operations)</p> <p>Julia Breakwell (Vice Principal, Student Experience &amp; Support)</p> </div> </div>
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span><b>Item</b></span> <span><b>Action</b></span> </div>
<p>1.</p>	<p><b>Welcome, Apologies &amp; Introduction</b></p> <p>The Chair of Corporation welcomed everyone present to the first meeting of the year.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Vicki Woodfield.</p> <p>Jane Britton and Adam Hall were expected to join the meeting at a later time.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Mo Horan, Vice Principal Apprenticeships, Partnerships and Skills, and Matt Gower, Vice Principal Quality to the meeting and invited each to summarise briefly, their roles leading up to them joining HoW College.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p><b>Summary of key outcomes from 23/24</b></p> <p>The Principal outlined the four objectives of the session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To see the impact of the changes made in 23/24 to give Governor's assurance that we are going in the right direction.</li> <li>• Ensure that Governors are aware of the issues still to be tackled.</li> <li>• To ensure that Governors are aware of and can articulate our strength and remaining areas for improvement.</li> <li>• To understand the direction of travel that the ELT is taking in 24/25 including questioning and challenge.</li> </ul> <p>Governors were advised that the figures presented were subject to final confirmation.</p> <p>The KPIs were presented under headings that are the seven strategic themes.</p> <p>Governors <b>noted</b> the following:</p> <p><b>16 – 18 Attendance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main aim - 87% up from last year and 1% above target.</li> <li>• English GCSE attendance was 78%, up from last year by 1%, and just falling short of the target by 2%</li> <li>• Maths GCSE attendance was 78%, up by 3% from last year and the target was achieved.</li> </ul>

## 16 – 18 Achievement

- Main aim – 81.3% (could increase to 83.8%), up 7.3%, above the national rate and 1.3% over target.
- Grade 4 – 9 English GCSE 23.4%, an increase of 8.4% and above target by 3.4%
- Grade 4 – 9 Maths GCSE 12.4%, an increase of 5.4% and above target by 2.4%

## Adult

- Retention 95% - an increase of 2% on last year, above the national rate and 2% above target
- Achievement 85.4% - an increase of 2.4%, 4% above the national rate and on target

## Apprentices

- Attendance – 88% - an increase of 2%
- Retention – 57.1% - still increasing. Up by 15.6% on last year and 2.3% above national rate
- Achievement - 56.7% - still increasing, up 17.3% and 3.3% above national rate.

For context, Governors were reminded that last year HoW College was the eighth worst College in the country for apprenticeships.

## High Needs

- Not all learners have their results. Current achievement is 80.8%. A reduction of 7.2% from last year and 9.2% below target.
- The department forecast for achievement however is 91.9%

Governors also noted that 16 – 18 and Adult GCSE Maths and English (all grades) had all increased on last year and were all above the national pass rate, with the exception of Adult English GCSE which is at the national pass rate.

For Functional Skills, Governors further noted that 16-18 Maths FS achievement is below last year, below target and 14.4% below the national rate. The achievement rate for English is 62.5% which is an increase of 18.2% on last year, above target by 16.5% and 23.5% above the national rate. Adult English FS achievement was 63.3% but is 3.3% below the national rate.

The presentation also included further breakdowns of the results for:

- 16-18
- Adults
- Subject areas 16-18
- Subject areas Adult

In terms of the impact of our subcontractors, it was noted that they enhance the courses and make a positive contribution towards the achievement data.

*A Governor noted that some of the lower % recorded for achievement were green, noting that this looks poor when the courses are looked at in isolation, however, they acknowledged that compared to the previous year they are still an increase.*

*A Governor asked for the national achievement rates for English and Maths. They were advised that the national picture is not published.*

To offer some context, the Vice Principal Quality confirmed that Ofsted will always

challenge but also take the national/sector backdrop into consideration. It is clear that we are moving areas on as much as is possible.

The Principal informed Governors that grade boundaries for English had increased and this had impacted upon 140 of our students. The awarding bodies were being lobbied across the sector about the increases.

Teaching and Learning Committee will look at the figures in more detail. *With regards to apprenticeships, a Governor asked how had we achieved the improvements? In response they were advised that there had been a relentless focus on scrutinising every learner individually from top to bottom.*

Governors were assured by Management that staff are being held to account, data is available, and it is being scrutinized, regular monitoring is also in place.

*A Governor questioned if the achievement rates for apprenticeships are linked to English and Maths? They were advised that they are different cohorts,*

Management assured Governors that:

- Functional Skills will benefit from the improvements being made to teaching and learning.
- Data is being reviewed at a granular detail.
- Subcontractors do make a positive contribution.
- Leaders are being challenged where the forecasting was inaccurate, this will be picked up in the Triple AAA meetings.

### Current Position

Governors were advised of our top ten strengths:

- Student satisfaction 96%
- Improved achievement rates at pace with the majority at or above national rate
- Adult retention 95% (target 93%, previous year 92%)
- Adult achievement – 4% above national rate
- Strong culture of support for learners
- Improved staff engagement
- Student behaviour
- Stakeholder engagement/skills planning
- Employer engagement delivering work encounters.
- Students feel and are safe.

Staff satisfaction was not listed because whilst staff engagement has improved there is still work to be done regarding satisfaction amongst staff, improvement has not been significant.

Many of the areas in College are above national rates meaning we have moved from being below average. Stakeholder engagement has increased, and students are receiving more work experience encounters. Work still needs to be done to adequately involve employers with curriculum design.

Governors noted the areas for improvement for 16 -18 and Adults, Apprenticeships and Others.

Management reassured Governors that underperforming courses will be addressed via the Rapid Improvement Groups and staff in those areas will be informed shortly. One area is going back into the RIG process because not as much progress as was expected had taken place. It was noted that both balance and caution will be needed as some of those areas are also the areas with the highest enrolment numbers.

SK,  
T&L Cttee

	<p><i>A Governor challenged the apprenticeships overdue by 180 days or more, questioning whether this is a financial hit for the College. In response they were advised that yes it could be, but they were assured that this is being reviewed, including looking back at the last date of learning and when funding stopped for them.</i></p> <p><b>The Roadmap for 2024/2025</b></p> <p>The Principal explained the top three priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed changes made in 23/24</li> <li>• To grow our 16-18 numbers</li> <li>• Work as one team and share good practice.</li> </ul> <p>The roadmap is an update from the last iteration for 23/24 shared with Governors at the March Strategic Planning Day and will be shared with staff shortly.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the leadership team have an operational document – the Strategic Implementation Plan that supports the work towards the strategy.</p> <p><i>A Governor observed that Subcontractors appear on the roadmap and questioned how we know that they are providing services that are of a high quality. Management assured Governors that they will be monitored rigorously from a quality perspective.</i></p> <p>Management reassured Governors that all areas will have a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) with 5 to 6 key objectives. The 6 L's will be embedded and the approach to working with the areas will be a combination of support, scrutiny and checking.</p> <p>Governors were advised that apprentices will have a clear development plan starting from this year, which will be applied retrospectively for students already on an apprenticeship. This has been informed by the support from the FE Commissioner.</p> <p><i>A Governor sought clarification that Ofsted do not look at courses with below 10 students, and why it seems that despite having more time with the tutors their results are often poor? Management confirmed that Ofsted do not normally look at courses with low numbers but that they were to assess any trends. In terms of quality, small groups do not equate to high achievement.</i></p> <p><i>A Governor observed that the national averages are not for 23/24. Management acknowledged this and advised that the information presented is the closest available now for comparison. The updated information will go through Teaching and Learning Committee, with a report to the April Corporation when the national figures are published for 23/24.</i></p> <p><i>A Governor asked to revisit the statement made about Subcontractors enhancing our learning, they questioned what we can learn from them, are we learning from them, given the value it was stated that they bring. Management acknowledged that there will be things that we can learn from them, and it should be a two way learning process, and more is expected to emerge with the closer scrutiny of their provision.</i></p>	SK T&L Cttee
4.	<p><b>Ofsted - Preparation for Monitoring Visit</b></p> <p>Governors acknowledged that the visit is expected before the end of term.</p> <p>Two inspectors are likely, and it is expected that they will test progress against the areas identified for improvement at the inspection in October 2023, this will include Leadership and Management, which includes Governance.</p> <p>Prior to the workshop Governors had been asked for feedback on what improvements have been made to improve governance and the arrangements that hold leaders to account. These had been put into a grid so that all could see what the feedback was.</p>	

	<p>Management shared the position paper for Governance, this is the narrative that would be followed and reported on. Governors were asked for feedback on the position paper and its content, format and whether any information is missing.</p> <p><i>Governors questioned the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Is the paper in the same format as the other position papers that will be produced? Management responded yes; the format is consistent across all of the position papers.</i></li> <li><i>Will it be kept to the current number of pages? Management confirmed that the number of pages is exactly right, the papers are intended to get the key points across succinctly.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>A Governor challenged the impact measures and evidence. Are they clear enough, do they need to be expanded upon? At the inspection there was some criticism of the minutes in that they lacked challenge. Taking minutes as an example, these have developed since the inspection, along with the turnaround for approval. Challenge by Governors has improved and is recorded clearly in the minutes, and a challenge log has also been developed for further assurance.</i></p> <p>It was agreed that other improvements have been implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new committee structure.</li> <li>A review of Governance conducted in 2024 by an external consultant had identified improvements, and also change in culture since the original External Review of Governance had taken place.</li> </ul> <p><i>A Governor questioned whether the position paper is essentially a crib sheet for Governors? Management confirmed it is, they are the key messages we want to get across. The Vice Principal, Quality suggested that Governors should consider if the actions and improvements in the position paper can be clearly articulated and are there examples to support them.</i></p> <p><i>The consensus of Governors was that a fair assumption would be to say that significant change and reasonable progress has been made since inspection.</i></p> <p><i>A Governor asked for clarification as to how many Governors participate in the monitoring visit and the full inspection. Management suggested that for the monitoring visit we will have to wait until the scoping meeting. For full inspection, no more than four Governors and ideally never just one Governor alone.</i></p> <p>In terms of next steps, Management will revisit the position paper and take note of the feedback from the Governors including the items in the grid. The position paper, along with the other papers will then be circulated to the Corporation.</p>	MD, Clerk
5.	<p><b>RSM Risk Presentation for Governors</b></p> <p>Governors received a presentation from Louise Tweedie (RSM) as to what risk is and what it is not; the requirements of the College Financial Handbook; good practice and reflections and things to think about for Governors.</p> <p>The College Financial Handbook (March 2024) covers the risk management “musts” for Governors and the Audit Committee. In summary, the overall responsibility for risk management and oversight of the risk register must be retained by the Governors with advice taken from the Audit Committee when provided.</p> <p>Governors need to consider risk appetite themes that can be aligned to the risks already identified.</p> <p>Further thought needs to be given where the risk has been accepted, nothing more needs to be done, however, we then include additional actions. The two items then</p>	



	<p>become contradictory. Is the College more exposed to risk than it is risk appetite? Focus should be on the highest risk and too much unnecessary detail will derail that focus.</p> <p><i>Governors acknowledged that over a period of time the register has increased in size and content.</i></p> <p><i>A Governor challenged whether the register should be discarded and started afresh to avoid duplication and onerous content? The response was that usual practice is to take key themes as a starting point and to break those down.</i></p> <p>RSM stated that general practice is for registers to be created based upon key themes and the top ten risks be reported to the Audit Committee.</p> <p>As an example, for June 2024 the themes were Systems and IT, Quality, Finance, Governance, Corporate and Student Support, Curriculum. All have red risks identified. The highest risk is failure to ensure the College has an effective workforce, this would be followed by the next three highest risks.</p> <p>The risk register content is already on the higher side of what RSM are accustomed to seeing in practice.</p> <p><i>A Governor observed that defining our risk appetite in words can be difficult. Are we risk averse or risk aware.</i></p> <p><i>Governors acknowledged that they understand their responsibilities and also that decisions are sometimes influenced by external factors such as the DfE or Ofsted.</i></p> <p><i>A Governor challenged what is our risk appetite; when did we last discuss it; was it documented; do Governors need a session to refresh themselves on this area. It was agreed to pick this up further outside of the meeting.</i></p> <p>Governors thanked LT for attending and acknowledged that the presentation was particularly useful. A copy of the presentation was requested - the Clerk advised that the presentation would be added to the Governor Portal the following day.</p> <p>Louise Tweedie left the meeting at this point.</p>	<p>CH/CC</p> <p>Clerk</p>
6.	<p><b>Strategic Risk Register Discussion</b></p> <p>The Vice Principal – Finance and Corporate Operations showed a proposed approach to replacing the current risk register format.</p> <p>This would see a change in the format to show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the risk score (ranked and still showing inherent and residual scores) by likelihood and impact.</li> <li>A condensed view showing the risk, description and effects, inherent risk scores and direction of travel, existing controls and the likelihood and impact and improvement actions. All would be visible in one condensed view.</li> <li>The register would be supported by a succinct RAG rated action plan and a Main Controls Summary.</li> </ul> <p>The register would be linked to the seven strategic themes.</p> <p>ELT and SLT need to review the content of the current register line by line.</p> <p>It was agreed that risk appetite needs to be kept on the Governance radar for the next 2 – 3 months. Corporation will need to agree the level of risk appetite and the Risk Management Plan will need to be reviewed to align with any changes or decisions</p>	<p>CC/Clerk</p>

	<p>made.</p> <p><i>A Governor stated that any papers put forward to Corporation / Committees going forward should refer to any risks / implications.</i></p> <p><i>A Governor questioned whether risk appetite is mentioned in the context of managing public money. The Clerk will look for references in the Managing Public Money guidance.</i></p> <p>Governors advised that benchmarking with South Staffordshire College had taken place and we have decided to remain with a spreadsheet format.</p> <p>All agreed that the new register format must be fit for purpose in terms of being able to update and for review by Audit Committee. It must provide Corporation with the appropriate assurances.</p> <p>It was noted that the risks relating to Governance are reviewed by the Triumvirate and the Chair of Audit Committee on behalf of the Corporation.</p> <p>All risks for the College should be scrutinised by the whole Corporation. More time needs to be given on Corporation agendas for the risk register item. The Clerk to make this provision on Corporation agendas going forward.</p> <p><i>Governors recognised that they are not risk experts but agreed that the process needs to be reviewed and the risk management cycle updated. A Governor further observed that the Board is in a better position now to do this.</i></p> <p><i>Governors were asked to think about what they consider to be their top four risks.</i></p> <p>ELT left the meeting at this point.</p>	<p>ELT / Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
7.	<p><b>Appointment of New Governors</b></p> <p>The Chair of Governance &amp; Search Committee gave a summary of the interview process for the two candidates that were recommended for appointment. Corporation <b>approved</b> the appointment of both Helen Davies and Steve Smith for a first four-year term of office as Corporation Members from 11 September 2024 to 31 July 2028.</p> <p>The Vice Principal for Student Experience and Support returned to the meeting for the next agenda item.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Safeguarding Policy</b></p> <p>Governors noted that the circulation of the revised policy outside of the cycle of business was due to the date when KCSIE 2024 was published. Changes to KCSIE influence changes made to the policy. It was noted that there are minimal changes to the policy for this year, more significant changes are expected when KCSIE 2025 is released following the consultation and review.</p> <p>Governors <b>approved</b> the policy. The next steps are to publish to the staff and student portals, the website and to signpost staff to its location.</p>	
9.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>On behalf of the Corporation the Chair expressed acknowledgement to what is now known as ELT, for their performance over the last year. Indications are that we are on a journey of improvement, and this is reflected in the good results being seen to date. The Principal was asked to pass on the thanks to the rest of the leadership team.</p>	Principal

	The Clerk advised that all of the information presented would be added to the Governor Portal.	Clerk
	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting:</b> Corporation, Thursday 12 December 2024	



