

The Manchester College Board

Minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2020 at 10:00am via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Jenifer Burden MBE, Cllr John Hacking, Catherine Hill OBE, Philip Johnson, Lisa O'Loughlin (Principal), Nikaeya Ridyard and Pauline Waterhouse OBE (Chair).

In Attendance: Barry Atkins (Vice Principal – FE Curriculum), Amy Avery (Assistant Company Secretary & Solicitor), Rachel Curry (Deputy Principal), John Evans (Vice Principal - Quality and Standards), Jennifer Foote MBE (General Counsel & Company Secretary), Christine Kenyon (Deputy Principal), Debbie Sanderson (Divisional Finance Director - College and Income Team), Marie Stock (Vice Principal – Student Experience and Support) and Michael Walsh (Vice Principal and Dean - HE and Higher Skills).

No declaration of interests were received.

Nikaeya Ridyard (the new student co-optee), Barry Atkins and Marie Stock (the new Vice Principals) were welcomed to their first meeting.

Part A

10/20	<p>Part A minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2020</p> <p>The Part A minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2020 were received and approved as an accurate record to be signed by the Chair in electronic form.</p>
11/20	<p>Appointment of the new student co-optee</p> <p>It was confirmed that Nikaeya Ridyard had been approved to be appointed by the LTE Group Board as the new student co-optee.</p>
12/20	<p>Interim Ofsted visit</p> <p>The Principal provided a verbal update on the recent Ofsted interim visit which had focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring a high quality of learning; • the operational implementation of remote education; and • safeguarding. <p>It was explained that Ofsted's aim of the visit was to gather information on teaching and learning during the current pandemic. Members understood that the College's current Ofsted grading would not be affected by the visit.</p>

	<p>The Board recognised Ofsted's positive verbal feedback (which would be subsequently published in a report) which included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. the College ensuring a two metre social distance; ii. its work experience models; iii. CPD; and iv. the adaptive work undertaken to ensure quality assurance. <p>The meeting probed whether any concerns were flagged that could be focused upon to improve quality and drive standards. Some student comments were discussed which could be addressed but this did not feature in the feedback.</p> <p>Whilst it was acknowledged that Ofsted did not highlight any performance issues regarding the College's special needs provision, it was recognised that this area required Board focus to drive improvement. The Board requested a substantive agenda item at the February or July 2021 meeting focussing on the high needs provision, to include input from managers and teachers in that area.</p> <p>Governors noted their thanks to the team members who contributed to the visit.</p>
<p>13/20</p>	<p>Student Outcomes Report inc. E & D Achievement Gaps</p> <p>The Board received the Student Outcomes Report for 2019/20 which included all ESFA-funded, classroom-based provision.</p> <p>An achievement gap analysis was not provided due to there being too many outstanding achievements to make the exercise sufficiently reliable. For assurance, a more definitive achievement gap analysis would be produced at the next meeting in February 2021.</p> <p>A comparison with 2017/18 and 2018/19 was provided highlighting achievement rates at whole College level, by age group, study level and main qualification type.</p> <p>In summary, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2019/20 FE student outcomes consisted mostly of Centre-Assessed Grades and results were provided by teachers and moderated through a series of achievement boards. It was noted there were currently well over 500 student learning aims outstanding, most of which related to delayed assessment situations and on-going issues with awarding organisations. This would likely result in a small increase in achievement rates before the final December ILR R04 deadline for colleges to finalise their 2019-20 achievement position.</p> <p>The report highlighted ten positives which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achievement rates for 16-18 students having increased for the third consecutive year and having reached 90% for the first time (6% above the current national rate); • very high achievement rates across all English, maths and ESOL; and • high grade achievement improvement at all levels and for nearly all qualification types.

Five areas for improvement were also signalled which included:

- five departments marked decline in achievement rates (hair and beauty, hospitality, childcare, counselling and animal care);
- a decline in the proportion of students receiving/exceeding their target grade on college-graded qualifications; and
- high grade achievement on vocational L1 and L2 qualifications remained too low.

The meeting was pleased to note that the picture was broadly in line with the prior year and that achievement and progress represented very good value for money.

The Board's attention was drawn to areas where there was scope for achievement rates to improve further e.g. up to 2% for adults, up to 1% for 16-18 and up to 6-7% in the construction and hospitality sectors.

Members probed whether the five departments that showed a marked decline in achievement rates was due to how well the students and teachers had been able to adapt to remote learning and what could be done this year to overcome any obstacles. The different reasons for the decline in each department were explained. The Board received assurance that where the curriculum offered was disadvantaged due to the lack of access to the physical learning environment this had been identified and mitigating action, such as the negotiation of alternative forms of assessment had been undertaken.

In response to a query regarding how many students had opted for a re-sit, the numbers were confirmed for English and maths GCSEs which were down on the prior year.

The meeting challenged whether lessons had been learned regarding Centre-Assisted Grades and unconscious bias and probed whether messages were being provided to learners regarding their progression throughout the year. The Board was assured that lessons had been learned and as a result earlier assessments were underway this year. The College was also speaking to students more regularly as this was the best way to inform on-going adjustments to the curriculum models. In respect of unconscious bias, it was confirmed that care had been taken to ensure that inappropriate factors were not considered and the rationale for the teachers' predicted grades were rigorously scrutinised, particularly for students with a learning disability or an education, health and care plan.

The Board congratulated the team on the student achievement and overall outcomes noting the report was very positive considering the national rates and the improvements which had been made on previous years.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that exams would go ahead in 2021 with some changes to the qualifications which would pose a challenge due to the College being located in a Tier 3 area as some of its students suffer from multiple layers of deprivation and had experienced more disruption than students in other areas. It was explained that this was the rationale for the College lobbying Government on revising exam procedures in 2021. The Board was assured that it would be kept fully apprised of developments.

14/20

College SAR & QIP for 2019/20

SAR

The Board received the FE SAR for consideration and approval. Although no longer a regulatory requirement to production of a SAR and associated QIP was still undertaken as best practice.

The new format of the SAR was highlighted along with the emphasis on the three I's (intent, implementation and impact); this approach was endorsed by the Board.

The most significant part of the SAR was signalled to the meeting as achievement and Areas of Improvement (Afi). It was explained that the SAR provided a picture of where the College was at the end of the last academic year.

In response to a query relating to digital learning and the students experience, assurance was given that new approaches were being developed which included a wider range of communications with students to obtain insights into quality and the student experience. E.g. by talking to students, undertaking surveys and holding focus groups. The Board was further assured that the design of remote learning had been reviewed and was being evaluated with the curriculum development process. The on-going CPD support for technical digital skills and pedagogy skills for teachers was welcomed by the Governors. It was also noted that enrichment, such as The Duke of Edinburgh programme, had been moved on-line.

The Board requested a further update on the quality assurance methodology for online student experience to be submitted to the next meeting.

Members considered the potential to achieve recognised outstanding provision and challenged on the need to ensure that curriculum areas were given the freedom to push for outstanding. A report to a future meeting on how curriculum areas were responding to the opportunity to achieve outstanding provision was requested.

In response to a Governor query regarding some students not feeling they understood enough about the Prevent agenda or radicalisation, it was explained that this was an Afi and a brand new scheme of work was underway and a number of actions had been put in place to promote this which would continue into next year. The Board raised a concern that students were exposed to greater risks on-line. Governors were assured that many students do understand how to keep themselves safe on-line and the College has team members who specialised in that area.

A member sought clarification on the departments or performance areas of concern, not necessarily arising from the current pandemic situation. The three key concerns / Afis were confirmed as:

1. On-line tutorial support;
2. Special needs provision; and
3. Service Retail Industry (SRI) arising from Covid, which included hair and beauty, hospitality and travel and tourism.

RESOLVED that The Manchester College SAR for 2019/20 be approved for inclusion in the LTE Group SAR.

	<p>QIP It was proposed that the Board would have sight of the QIP in the February meeting which would include 16 Afls to improve the quality of provision. Members agreed with the proposed direction of travel to allow for a more iterative process to be undertaken.</p>
<p>15/20</p>	<p>COVID-19 Update – Transition The Board received the above report which detailed the significant mobilisation operation to re-open the College sites and transition to face-to-face learning, whilst ensuring a safe environment for students and staff.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED that as the items to be considered are deemed commercially sensitive, the Board moved into confidential session.</p>
	<p>----- Chair</p> <p>----- Date</p>

The meeting closed at 12:31 pm.