



The Manchester College Board

Minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 2021 at 10am via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Jenifer Burden MBE, Justice Ellis, Mark Fletcher, 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), Rachel Curry (Deputy Principal), Katy Elliott (Assistant Company Secretary & Legal Officer), 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).

The Board welcomed Justice Ellis and Mark Fletcher to their first meeting.

No declaration of interests were received.

Part A

01/21	<p>Part A minutes of the meeting held on 1st May 2020</p> <p>The Part A minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2020 were received, approved as a correct record, to be signed by the Chair in electronic form.</p>
02/21	<p>COVID-19 Update</p> <p>The Board received the Covid-19 update which demonstrated the efforts made whilst teaching in national lockdown. The Board was assured key priorities were being met. Meaningful high-quality learning continued to be provided online and appropriate support for the health and safety and wellbeing of employees and learners was provided.</p> <p>The Board was pleased to hear on-site education was still being delivered for the most vulnerable. Careers, employability and welfare advice and guidance were also still being supported. Financial support for students in hardship and safeguarding support for the most vulnerable and at-risk was in place and specialist support for students with high needs remained a focus.</p> <p>The Board noted that attendance was 81.49%, which was 1.25% higher than the last quarter. Attendance had therefore improved but the Board recognised that challenges remained. Attendance registers had improved to 5.75% with intervention meetings continuing to take place and anomalies being identified.</p>

Key priorities were recording data accurately and in a timely manner and ensuring the successful recruitment and progression of all students.

Moving forward the Board was informed that it was critical to keep all employees and learners updated with communications and an engagement and wellbeing strategy was under way. Weekly COVID-19 tests were available at a test centre established at the Shena Simon campus to colleagues attending site during period of national lockdown. Assurance was provided to the Board that a Planning Group was working on plans for 'mass' testing following lockdown.

In order to understand the priorities for the College, data was provided on the Manchester and Greater Manchester Covid-19 transmission rates for context.

In order to give assurance 6 weekly mock tests had been implemented for all FE students internally and teacher assessed grades were being reviewed externally.

The Manchester College Remote Education Offer had been published on 15th January with all students following their normal timetable.

Learning & support available whilst online included:

- Provide alternative learning material (for example, via post).
- If 16-18 students did not have access to a laptop or a tablet or where alternative materials are not appropriate, access to a College campus in order to use a computer was available.
- Support with Wi-Fi dongles and support with the cost of additional data.
- Support via the Library team with the resetting of passwords and how to access Microsoft Teams.
- Support with any online safeguarding concerns.

Performance

- Recent progress check point reflects very similar point as previous years.
- Teachers using Awarding organisations adaptations where possible to minimise risk of failure.
- Attendance was slightly higher than the same point in the previous year.
- Risk of non-achievement was predominantly around practical based subjects due to lack of adaptations available.
- QBRC – changed agenda to targeted approach to understand risks and support required to ensure students achieve.

A Covid Tuition Fund existed for 3500 eligible students, with a purpose to provide additional small group academic support/tuition booster sessions for 16-18 learners that did not have GCSE grade 4 in English and/or maths.

Interventions to date included:

- Additional English and maths lessons in place – reverted to online.
- Additional curriculum booster sessions in place – reverted to online.
- Employment of new staff to chase non-attendance to online lessons.
- Employment of mental health specialist.
- Retained funds to allow for booster sessions from Easter to end of exam period.

- Monthly Curriculum review and finance Covid-19 fund meetings to monitor progress and spend

Students

- The College was following government guidelines for students attending site.
- The provision of 'Secrets to Success' – a guide on how to learn whilst at home.
- Century Learning – new online resource for English & Maths.
- Awarding Organisation online resources.
- Revised Enrichment offer.
- Reviewed student risk level for all student known to be 'at risk'.

The Board agreed that support and welfare for vulnerable students, including young carers of clinically vulnerable people, was of the upmost priority, with a staged process in place for weekly monitoring and welfare calls depending on the level of need. Weekly updates had been ongoing with both Manchester City Council and the GMCA.

In response to a query regarding access to laptops, wifi, and the domestic environment and the impact this had on learning, the Principal confirmed this remained a serious issue. The college had provided over 3000 devices to students to date but recognised that supporting learners within a challenging home environment needed a multi-agency approach.

In response to a query about returning to face to face learning, it was confirmed that there was a test centre at the Shena Simon campus and a model was being put in place for mass testing, should the college open for face to face learning. The Board was satisfied that all measures had been discussed and undertaken but enforced how crucial it was to use the student voice to enable testing and vaccination.

Adapted quality assurance arrangements

The Board received details of the quality assurance on the methodology for the on-line student experience whilst in lockdown.

The report shared the key adaptations the college had made to its quality processes, to provide strong support to curriculum departments and to teachers, tutors and support practitioners. Insights were shared into how well the support was being received together with an assessment of the quality of teaching and learning and the student experience in the current circumstances.

In response to a query, it was confirmed this method of learning underpinned the aims of the "leadership of learning" initiative. In September 2020, six-weekly reviews had been implemented to enable the Senior Leadership Team to have oversight and control of issues as they might emerge.

In response to a query it was confirmed that the engagement with the student body varied depending on the age range and level. Each campus had student representatives and student surveys were being conducted.

03/21	QIP Update <p>The Board were presented with the QIP update. The Board recognised that the plan addressed pertinent and critical issues for the improvement of quality in the institution. It was explained that the intent was to move to a three year improvement plan. Whilst the Board accepted this move as good practice it tested the assumptions made to ensure that the plan would be future proofed and would continue to meet the expectations the Board had of it as a driver for improvement.</p> <p>The Board was particularly keen, as a general point, to ensure that the impact for students was reflected in targets. In particular AFI2, Target A did not evidence impact but was rather statement of aspiration, though it was acknowledged that this should be read with Target C which articulated the impact for students.</p> <p>With reference to AFI 15 the Board noted the intent to recruit to a resource management function to allow teachers and lecturers to focus on pedagogy.</p> <p>A further query was raised in respect of virtual work experience and how employer engagement was being positively undertaken under current restrictions. It was confirmed that although work experience on sites had proved more difficult since January, work skills were being taught where possible. relationships with employers were being maintained and more sponsored programmes had recently been signed up to.</p>
04/21	Student Outcomes Report 2019/20 <p>The Board was provided with an update on the student outcomes report as presented to the November Board meeting. It was noted that headline achievement rates had increased to 90.9% for 16-18, 94.7% for adults leading to an overall achievement rate of 93%. Members reflected on the absence of benchmark data but understood that the absence of national achievement rates for 19/20 was a result of the pandemic. It was agreed that some informal benchmark data could be gathered from comparator colleges in order to provide a degree of informal assurance.</p> <p>The meeting focused on achievement gap data which was not available at the time of the November meeting.</p> <p>Governors noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The achievement gap for students from White British backgrounds remained static. Although achievement rates for 16-18 female, 16-18 male and adult male White British students increased, the increases were not as large as for those age/gender groups as a whole. Achievement by adult female White British students declined, causing the achievement gap to widen for this group and to fall below the most recent national rate. • Achievement rates for 16-18 students from Caribbean backgrounds increased by more than the whole College rates for these age/gender groups,



	<p>resulting in their achievement gaps narrowing (16-18 females) or disappearing (16-18 males). However, achievement rates for adult students from Caribbean backgrounds declined and their achievement gaps widened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This pattern was repeated for students with mixed race Caribbean heritage. Achievement rates increased significantly for 16-18-year olds and their achievement gaps narrowed, but achievement by adult students in this ethnic group declined markedly with a corresponding widening of their achievement gaps.• Although achievement rates continued to increase and remained above the College's overall achievement rates for the most sizeable ethnic groups within the College's student population, there were some indications in the 2019/20 that achievement gaps emerged for female students from: Any other Asian background (16-18), Arab (16-18), Bangladeshi (16-18), Indian (19+) and White & Black African (16-18). Although most of these groups were small (typically between 30 and 50 students across the whole College) the College would need to explore performance of these groups in more detail to identify causal factors. This would more likely to be a spike in withdrawals prior to lockdown in a few curriculum areas with a concentration of these groups, and to be confident there was no link between the impact of the pandemic and gender roles in some cultural settings and ability to study and complete qualifications successfully or potential for unconscious bias to have contributed.• In addition to sharing and reviewing achievement gap analysis with Assistant Principals, this year it would become a standing agenda item on the College's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) Group, with the intention that the group would develop a wider range of responses capable on helping to narrow achievement gaps. <p>In response to a query, it was confirmed that greater analysis would need to be conducted to see if achievement rates were linked with digital poverty.</p> <p>The Board reviewed the Strategic/Stakeholder implications and risks associated with the report and endorsed the direction of travel.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED that as the items to be considered are deemed commercially sensitive, the Board moved into confidential session.</p>
	<p>----- Chair ----- Date</p>