



## **TMC Board meeting**

**10:00am-13:30pm on 1 February 2024, Openshaw**

Present: Philip Johnson (Chair), Catherine Hill OBE, Rachel Curry (Principal), Jenifer Burden, Justice Ellis, Mubarak Oyebode

In Attendance: Mark Harris (Vice Principal: Adult Curriculum), Debbie Sanderson (Vice Principal: Planning and Performance), Michael Walsh (Deputy Principal: Adult Curriculum and Student Support), Ed Lack (Group Director of Quality), Susan Diamond (Group Quality Team Director), Marie Stock MBE (Vice Principal – Student Experience and Support), Michelle Fletcher (Vice Principal – TMC Quality), Orla Wood (Divisional Finance Director – College and Income Team), Lorna Lloyd-Williams (Company Secretary & General Counsel), Sherman Wu (Governance Officer), Ms. Rachel Robson (External board reviewer)(via Teams), Sarah Johnson (External board reviewer)(via Teams)

For Curriculum insight- Creative Arts Department item 5: Mr. Stuart Steen (Assistant Principal – Creative Industries), Charlotte Swindells (Head of Department - Performing Arts), Lucy Oldham (Head of Department – Performing Arts), Maria Foran (Head of Department – Visual Arts)

For Student Voice item 13: Mr Alfie Finn (Student of Media), Mr. Reece Griffiths (Student of L3 Art & Design), Ms. Amiee Swan (Student of L3 PA), Mr. Oliver Luke (Student of Level 3 Music Performance)

### **DRAFT BOARD MINUTES**

**The meeting opened at 10:00am and was quorate with at least 3 Governors present.**

The Board welcomed Susan Diamond to attend the meeting as an observer as part of her professional development plan. Rachel Robson and Sarah Johnson, the external board reviewers, were also welcomed to attend the meeting via Teams as observers.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received and accepted from Dame Ann Limb, Garry Bridges and Mark Fletcher. In the absence of Dame Ann Limb, with the agreement of the Board, Philip Johnson took the Chair.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3. Minutes of the meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 were received and approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **4. Matters arising**

The Board received an update that the schedule of Deep Dives and Learning Walks had been sent to the board of governors and noted the actions completed including those items that had been incorporated into the agenda of the meeting in respect of Quality Improvement Plan, Ofsted Preparedness Report, Student Outcome Report, staff pulse survey results, capacity review and principalship student lunches.

#### **5. Curriculum insight – Creative Arts Department**

*Mr. Stuart Steen (Assistant Principal – Creative Industries), Charlotte Swindells (Head of Department - Performing Arts), Lucy Oldham (Head of Department – Performing Arts) and Maria Foran (Head of Department – Visual Arts) joined the meeting*

The Board was presented with an overview of the Creative Arts Department in respect of items such as current student numbers, attendance, profile of the student cohort and achievements. It was noted that the new campus had presented certain challenges in its first full year of operation as colleagues adjusted to a new environment having brought teams from sites across Manchester together in one place, including issues with timetabling and implementing hot-desking for staff. However, it was also noted that there were significant benefits, such as receiving positive feedback from students, which had contributed to an increase in student numbers and increased partnerships with employers in the City. The opening evening events indicated an increase in attendance, prompting the College to need to address capacity challenges and the board was assured that the College was considering this as part of the capacity challenges associated with cohort growth over the coming years.

It was reported that 33% learners declared learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with an increase in mental health and safeguarding issues. While there had been improvement in student attendance, the Board was informed of the actions being taken to further enhance attendance. A governor inquired if there any inhibitors hindering future progress overall for the department and in response the team referred to challenges in recruiting English and Maths teachers and navigating the impact of curriculum reform on Level 2 students. It was assured that the College was working on a recruitment strategy for hard to recruit areas such as English and maths in particular, as well as having a focus on exam technique and preparation in response to curriculum reform.

The geographical areas where the students travelled from for the academic years of 2021/22 and 2022/24 were presented to the Board and it was noted that there was minimal change as a result of the public transport strategy implemented by Greater Manchester and the advantageous location of the new campus.

The Board was also presented with the employability strategy of the Creative Industries department such as working with studio, media companies and institutions like Manchester Art Gallery and how the collaboration could help to assist with capacity challenges such as utilizing the classrooms at Manchester Art Gallery but was providing incredible experiences for our students to work from and in the gallery, with alumni working in partnership with current students on projects like 'Future Creatives'. The Greater Mancunians project involving students photographing renowned contributors to GM over a period of 7 years was outlined and the Board informed that the exhibition of the work would be held at Manchester Central Library in April 2024. A governor asked why these employers wanted to work with us and noted that it was attributed to the College's reputation and often now their social responsibility ethos had led them to be involved and want to shape the creative industries of the future and development new talent. A governor inquired about the College's criteria for selecting the employers and how to run the collaboration project smoothly. It was noted that factors such as reputation and whether the project was community-based would be considered when selecting the employer. The College would implement infrastructure development to support project work with the anticipation that more coordinators and resources could be needed in future. A governor inquired whether any change in terms of getting penetration with employers was seen with the

introduction of new city centre campus and state-of-the-art facilities. It was confirmed that there had indeed been a change, with more employers wishing to collaborate with the College as a result of the enhanced facilities, awareness of the student talent and there was a need for the College to sustain this.

The Board was taken through the key strengths and areas of focus identified during the teaching, learning, and assessment deep dives. A governor raised a question about the issues with IT.. The Board was informed that the IT director was aware and actively working to resolve it. A governor questioned staff well-being and feedback from the Creative Industries team. The Head of Department explained some of the history in relation to recent events and advised that there was still more work to be done on workload and a strategy would be developed to ensure proper job allocation among the staff. The Board stressed the necessity for further investigation to uncover the underlying reasons for the low survey results. They were assured that a comprehensive understanding of the survey results would be obtained, and efforts would be made to delve deeper into the matter. A staff member provided additional insight into potential approaches to improving working methods, suggesting a focus on system enhancements for assistance.

*Mr. Stuart Steen (Assistant Principal – Creative Industries), Charlotte Swindells (Head of Department - Performing Arts), Lucy Oldham (Head of Department – Performing Arts) and Maria Foran (Head of Department – Visual Arts) left the meeting*

## **6. Overview of the content of the meeting**

The Principal presented the following key points to the Board:

- There was good and steady progress with agreed actions contained within the Quality Improvement Plan with the impact being seen from learning walks and deep dives
- Deep dives providing in-year feedback to enable action to be taken where required and showing initial impact of quality improvement
- Proposal to adjust the self-assessment grade for personal development
- English and maths – emerging impact seen in November GCSE results for English
- Student curriculum focus groups would see a greater capture of qualitative student feedback on quality of education throughout this half term
- Feedback from the Staff Wellbeing Pulse survey was showing positive results against TES benchmark data
- People metrics such as turnover and sickness were reduced on 2022/23
- Project groups in place to assess impact of curriculum reform and review the capacity challenge
- At Period 5, College and Resources were £0.9m favourable to budget which aligns to checkpoint
- Current forecast was that we would be above 16-18 learner number allocation for 2023/24 by over 200 learners and in a strong position to get in-year growth allocated
- Consistent rate of safeguarding concerns being assessed and managed by the local campus-based teams

The Board commended the excellent work done by the College in making a progress on Maths and English and the emerging impact was seen.

## **7. Mid year report on quality including Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)**

The Board was taken through a mid-year report on quality, including a position update on the inspection readiness strategy and information appertaining to business as usual (BAU) and inspection readiness quality processes. In terms of Deep Dive BRAG rating for Adult Learning Programmes and Education

Programmes for Young People, it was highlighted that there was rationale behind each move for those courses having changed rating since the last TMC divisional board meeting and the BRAG rating for numbers of courses had been improved.

A governor expressed concern about three programmes in the creative industries still being rated as red, with one dropping to red due to staffing-related issues. She inquired about the College's confidence in making progress to improve their ratings. In response, the Board was advised that the quality team review all the courses on the 'red' BRAG list and initiate intervention where necessary, for example, enhanced support reviews. Impact of this work was being seen in some areas, and in others the action plan would be over a longer term.

A governor shared his recent observation of a Deep Dives in Health & Social Care and some of the challenges the quality team had noted as areas for improvement. He noted that Health & Social Care was rated as amber in the report as a result of a previous deep dive (not this most recent one) and challenged what actions should be taken to reassess the categorisation against the experience in this latest deep dive. The Board were advised of the methodology used to assess this and noted that an enhanced review had been commissioned in this department to address TLA and leadership and management in this programme. The College was addressing the issues identified to progress forward. The governor also asked whether the Deep Dives methodology had been impactful within management teams in the College and their understanding of the Ofsted methodology.. It was noted that the experiences of Deep Dives had been transformational in some departments, with the curriculum and quality teams working together to build knowledge and understanding and impactful change. The feedback in some areas might not have been as positive as expected by curriculum managers and the quality team had been addressing this.

The student co-opted member shared his observation about the lack of students' enthusiasm to study English and Maths lessons in which they might not be interested. He inquired if there were any procedures in place to assist the students to transfer between courses from GCSE to functional skills. The Principal explained that the maths and English resit programme was a government requirement and student's prior qualifications in the subjects would result in them needing to be enrolled on the different qualifications. The student co-opted member also highlighted that the varying expectation from maths and English teachers, noting that maths teachers tended to administer minimal entries for exams to students, which resulted in some students being unable to progress due to failing in the Maths exam.. The Principal assured that she would discuss with the Vice Principal the disparities in expectations between maths and English teachers and assured that the Head of Department would reach out to the student co-opted member to discuss the observed experiences for the management team's further investigation.

**ACTION: The Principal**

The Board further discussed the report and emphasized the importance of addressing any areas for improvement within departments with a blue rating and asked for assurance to have measures in place to address those. It was explained that the quality process was applied equally to blue-rated areas which had key targets feeding into their QIP and all areas for improvement would be reviewed three times a year. Additionally, the Board inquired about departmental awareness of their BRAG ratings, with confirmation that departments had been informed along with associated improvement areas. The Board also expressed their aspiration to see green-rated areas to be moving to blue rating.

A governor asked for more elaboration on the employer alliance model which would be established in every curriculum area and for every course across the College. It was agreed that the Principal would ask the Employment Engagement Team to explain the alliance model at next board meeting.

**ACTION: The Principal and Employment Engagement Team**

In terms of Afl 9 regarding a small minority of curriculum areas which were underperforming (Leadership & Management), the Board was assured that additional actions would be undertaken in response to the results from Deep Dives.

In terms of Afl 6 regarding a minority of students having an underdeveloped understanding of British Values and ideas around radicalisation and extremism, in response to challenge regarding this the Board were assured that this area was under review and significant progress had been made and analysis would be presented at next meeting within the QIP

**ACTION: VP Quality & Standards**

The Board discussed the findings of learning walks and British Values and sought further clarification. The Board was advised that more information would be provided in the Personal Development paper covered on the agenda. The governors commented that during Deep Dives, they observed that students consistently received information about British Values in the classroom. In addition to enriching the understanding of British Values among students, the Board also mooted the idea of students exploring work-related values as part of work placements, as many employers would have their own values.

**8. Position Statement – Personal Development Report**

The Board was taken through the report with the following highlighted:

- proposing to alter the self-assessment grade for Personal Development from a 'requires improvement' to a 'good' for the mid-year position in 2023/24
- the significant progress that had been made against targets in the QIP attributed directly to key Afl 6: A minority of students had an underdeveloped understanding of British Values and ideas around radicalisation and extremism
- the significant progress that had been made against targets in the QIP attributed directly to key Afl 8: The curriculum insufficiently developed students' understanding of how to keep physically and mentally healthy, have healthy relationships, and maintain an active lifestyle

The Board were advised that the proposal was to alter the grading to a 2 in the mid-year position not the SAR for the previous year. The paper set out the arguments for this. The results from learning walk 2 in relation to British Values and the positive impact evidenced was highlighted to the Board. The Board further asked whether the same methodology used for previous grading was applied in assessing the new grading and the Board received assurance of that. It was

**RESOLVED** that the self-assessment grading for Personal Development be altered to a 2 in the mid-year position.

The student co-opted member posed a question regarding the integration of personal/community values as part of tutorials. The Principal welcomed this suggestion and highlighted that there would be work around communities, including projects such as volunteering in term 3. It was further proposed that the Vice Principal to invite the student co-opted member to join the student focus group, where they could delve into tutorials, gather ideas, and provide additional insights based on students' feedback.

**ACTION: Vice Principal FE**

The student co-opted member raised a question about whether the College should enhance communication with parents regarding students' attitudes or learning behaviours. It was noted that the College conducted regular parents' evening discussions to address both academic performance and students' behaviour/contribution in class.

## **9. Strategic Plan Key Performance Metrics**

The Board was briefed on the following key points:

- A review had taken place to establish which Key Performance Indicator (KPI) best measures performance against each of the objectives in the five themes of the new strategic plan for year one of the plan
- Not every objective had a proposed KPI, some objectives would have actions within an operational plan, which would have SMART targets and milestones that would demonstrate achievement.
- As the strategy was for the period to 2027, some of the proposed KPIs which were not yet measurable and were scheduled to be measured from a future year.
- The report also flagged that some of the measures were in development and therefore not yet reportable, but they would be included as soon as the measure was available.
- Where possible, for each KPI the comparative prior two years outcome was shown, along with the proposed 23/24 target and comment.
- The report also indicated the frequency in which they would be measured, with some able to be reported in year, whilst others were annually reported.
- Where measurable, there would be a breakdown of the KPI to report disadvantage student's performance versus the performance of all students, for example in achievement.
- Some of the targets aligned with other targets, such as QIP, Accountability Statement or LTE Group Board target.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the presentation of the report and the significant numbers of KPI. The Board was advised that the KPIs were drawn from an iterative process and delivered from a quality perspective. The board also discussed some of the wording used in the theme objectives and it was agreed to tweak some of the wording. The governors also commented that they would like to have a clear distinction between what was being measured and what pertained to operational plans together with more qualitative data alongside operational plans and KPIs. The Board asked that an executive summary featuring targets and outlining the key strategic KPIs and any changes compared to the previous report would be presented at the next meeting for board's scrutiny. It was also notable that the key strategic KPIs with risk and opportunities would be put as a standing agenda item.

### **ACTION: Vice Principal of Resources, Planning and Performance, and the Company Secretary**

Governors questioned the 100% targets and were advised that it was set at this level as they were mandatory targets.

In terms of the carbon reduction plan, the Board was informed that the Group Board had approved the carbon reduction strategy and this year's target served as a baseline for measurement in next year. The Board was assured that tracking for next year would be in place.

Governors questioned the recruitment vacancies target and the use of the word average and asked to receive a figure for hard to recruit which the TMC Board would like to look at separately (distinguished by department).

## **ACTION: Principalship**

A discussion took place regarding the KPI in respect of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The Board commented that the the staff survey being used as the measure of this KPI had the potential for different interpretation of the survey's questions. The Board was assured that EDI coordinator was working on EDI with various focus groups and collecting the staff feedback.. Board's feedback would also be shared with EDI committee and a series of recommendations on EDI KPI would be discussed and brought back to the TMC Board following the EDI committee's consideration.

## **ACTION: Vice Principal Resources, Planning and Performance and Vice Principal Student Experience and Support**

### **10. Performance Report Resources**

The Board was briefed with the following key points:

- FE Curriculum Reform and Capacity Update: Curriculum Reform continued to evolve and impact was being monitored closely. The review of capacity/balance and mix of provision had commenced. A further update on the impact from curriculum reform would be provided at the next meeting
- English and Maths – November Resit results, positive English high grades versus prior year at +5.9%.
- Staff Turnover, Sickness and Wellbeing Survey: Staff turnover rate was 16.6% YTD, however this included a high number of leavers at the end of a Fixed Term Contract, excluding these the rate was 9.2%. Responses to the lifecycle survey (exit interviews for example) were being collected and an update would be provided when a quantum reached. Sickness absence was running at 3.68% which was lower than 2022/23. Of this 2.57% was long term and 1.11% short term. During November a staff wellbeing pulse survey was carried out which had 302 respondents, an action plan was being put into place.
- Financial outlook: At Period 5 2023/24 TMC College and Resources were positive to budget contribution YTD. November Checkpoint had taken place and opportunities in 16-18 funding and utilities recognised, along with adjustment for the above budget pay award. Overall, a positive adjustment to contribution.
- No risk to in-year funding in 2023/24 for 16-18: Exceeding 16-18 learner enrolment to generate in year growth funding allocation and a positive outlook for 2024/25.
- H&S accidents/incidents : No RIDDOR reportable incidents in Quarter 2.
- Student Support & Safeguarding: an update was provided of activity in the second half term of the year, October to December 2023.

A governor asked how the College could manage the progress of curriculum reform in light of the previous Deputy Principal's retirement. The Board was informed that the previous Deputy Principal would remain at the College until 2025 working part time as an advisor, providing continuity during this transitional period. Additionally, some changes had been made in the past two months, such as engaging with other colleges to provide insight into the current landscape.

The Board received an update that the College would expect an increase to approximately 8,000 in the 16-18 cohort by 2028/29 and several factors would affect the capacity such as the planned changes to the funding of adult learning and the impact of the review of UCEN strategy. It was noted that the College would commence resource planning for 2024/25 based on what was known to date. The Board reiterated that there was a need to look at what the College could do in September and the Principal explained that there was an emerging crisis across GM in post-16 places, highlighting that even if capital funding were in place now, the impact would not be seen until some time later. Governors challenged whether there would be the resource in the organization to deliver the desired standard and the Principal addressed this in detail and advised that the issues had been considered and debated internally and operationally.

It was brought to the Board's attention that the November GCSE resits saw a positive movement in the high-grade position for English whereas maths resit results were largely unchanged. The Board emphasized that there was a need to look into maths given that only 10% of students obtained high grades. The Board was assured that a progress model would be presented at the next meeting. A governor inquired if there was shortage of maths teacher in the College and the Board was provided with the updated position. It was advised that attraction and retention strategy and importance of initial assessment during induction would be considered for 2024/25.

**ACTION: Deputy Principal – 16-18**

It was notable that there had not been much change on the data of turnover, health and wellbeing. Following the completion of wellbeing pulse survey among the staff, discussion had been undertaken amongst the College leadership team meeting during January and action plan to be created. A governor questioned whether there was a correlation between health and well-being and turnover and it was explained that the HR department had introduced lifecycle surveys to collect the data to consider this. The Company Secretary questioned when the data would be available and reminded the Board that the board of governors held the overall responsibilities in relation to staff and wellbeing. It was agreed that a report with more information on the data collected would be brought to one of the next two meetings.

**ACTION: Vice Principal Resources, Planning and Performance**

In terms of safeguarding, it was noted that there was not much change on the figure against last meeting and the Board was assured that various support was in place for students and mental health remained a key area of concern.

A governor sought clarification on the ways of working within construction department as outlined in health and safety report and the detailed explanation had been provided to the Board.

The Board was then presented with the finance updates and noted that AEB had increased by £0.3m with a challenge to over deliver against the GM allocation. The Board noted the position on budget was in line with the November checkpoint.

**11. TMC Compliments and Complaints Report 2022/23**

The Board was presented with the summary and analysis of the complaints and compliments received in 2022/23. The Board asked for and received assurance that there was feedback to complainant on the complaints. A governor inquired about the mechanism for receiving compliments and the Board received assurance that a formal mechanism and robust process were in place.

A governor questioned whether the next review date of the report being in 2027 should be shortened to one year and it was agreed to amend the review date.

**ACTION: Vice Principal – Resources, Planning and Performance**

**12. Policies for recommendation to Group Board – the Complaints and Compliments Policy**



The Board was taken through the summary of the Complaints and Compliments Policy. A governor inquired whether the policy specifically addresses student complaints, to which it was clarified that indeed the policy was designed for student complaints. It was also agreed to revise the title of the policy to student complaints and compliments policy.

A governor questioned whether there was a separate policy dealing with complaints and compliments on senior post holders and received assurance that there was.

**RESOLVED** that the Complaints and Compliments Policy be approved subject to the amendments.

### 13. Student Voice

*Mr Alfie Finn (Student of Media), Mr. Reece Griffiths (Student of L3 Art & Design), Ms. Amiee Swan (Student of L3 PA) and Mr. Oliver Luke (Student of Level 3 Music Performance) joined the meeting.*

The Board received an update on the analysis of student voice activity since the last TMC board meeting and the planned activity for term 2.

Governors then had the opportunity to discuss with the students present their experience and hear from them what they had been doing and their next steps. Positive feedback was received regarding the staff and the tutors. Positive feedback was also given regarding the pastoral support from tutors and staff too. Governors asked whether there was anything that could have been done better and differently and it was noted that students occasionally faced challenges such as space constraints, private space for study, disparities between classroom and library systems, limited lunch break, teacher turnover, and low attendance in certain classes. Additionally, a student proposed aligning class exercises more closely with career objectives. The principalship team would address the above issues.

The students also highlighted experiencing IT issues, and the Board was reassured that an update on IT matters would be presented at the next meeting.

**ACTION: The Principal**

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**Chair**

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**Date**

**The meeting closed at 13.40pm**