

**College of West Anglia
Minutes of
The Corporation Board Meeting
13 October 2021
8.30 am
Boardroom, U125, University Centre, King's Lynn Campus**

Present	Sharon Cambridge	Governor (Chair)
	Andrew Cave	Governor
	Dave Clark	Governor
	Rebecca Hamilton	Governor
	Ray Harding	Governor
	Scott Leadley	Governor
	Alan Measures	Governor
	Sally Mitton	Governor
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal)
	Gill Rejzl	Governor
	Gary Webb	Governor
	Hein van den Wildenberg	Governor
	Donna Woodruff	Governor
Attending	Paul Harrison	Vice Principal Corporate Services
	Ruth Harrison	Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality
	Paul O'Shea	Assistant Principal Student Services
	Rob Petto	Assistant Principal Funding & Performance
	Stephen Halls	Clerk to the Corporation

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Chris Ashman, Sam Fletcher, Carolyn Rand and Roderick Watkins. Lee Smith was absent from the meeting.

2 Briefing Presentation – Keeping Children Safe in Education

Paul O'Shea, Assistant Principal Student Services and Designated Safeguarding Lead provided an update on the recent changes to the latest edition of the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, September 2021. The latest guidance had been circulated to Governors on 13 September 2021.

The presentation included updated information on peer-on-peer abuse, online safety, child criminal exploitation and sexual exploitation and clarification on record keeping. Aspects of safer recruitment and new guidance on dealing with low level concerns and allegations against staff were noted. Information was being circulated to students via the website, student portal and a poster campaign across all campuses. The College's Safeguarding Policy would be brought to the Board for review and approval, along with the annual safeguarding report, to its meeting on 8 December 2021.

Governors asked if there had been any instances noticed regarding poverty or with students suffering from malnourishment. The Assistant Principal advised that Cambridgeshire County Council had a winter support scheme to support this. Recent

changes to Universal Credits for families could have an adverse effect on children in low income families.

The Chair reminded Governors that it was important for all members of the Board to have oversight of safeguarding matters, even though currently both herself and Gill Rejzl served as link governors to the Safeguarding Committee and regularly attended its meetings.

Ray Harding joined the meeting at 8.47 am

3 Declarations of Interests

Declarations of interest were recorded for Alan Measures (Item 6.i – Re-appointment to the Board); Senior Postholders and the Clerk (Item 6.v – Remuneration Committee Annual Report).

4 Minutes of the previous meeting – 30 June 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2021 were reviewed and agreed as being an accurate record of the meeting.

5 Matters Arising

The progress against the outstanding matters from previous meetings was summarised in the report for item 5.

Governors asked for an update on the numbers of new staff that required safeguarding and Prevent training. The Chair advised that the Employment Policy Committee had received updated information at its meeting on 6 October 2021. Work was progressing in addressing the situation which related mainly to casual and hourly-paid teaching staff.

6 Governance Items

1) Re-Appointment of Governors

Alan Measures left the meeting at 8.51 am

The Clerk advised that the Search & Governance Committee, at its meeting on 6 October 2021, had considered the re-appointment of Alan Measures for a second term of 4 years, ending on 6 December 2025 and was recommending the re-appointment to the Board for approval.

The re-appointment of Alan Measures for a second term of 4 years was approved by the Board.

Alan Measures re-joined the meeting at 8.53 am

The Clerk advised that the Search & Governance Committee, at its meeting on 6 October 2021, had considered the re-appointment of Chris Ashman for a second term of 4 years, ending on 6 December 2025 and was recommending the re-appointment to the Board for approval.

The re-appointment of Chris Ashman for a second term of 4 years was approved by the Board.

2) Governor Attendance 2020/21 - The Clerk noted the excellent levels of attendance by governors during the 2020/21 year, which achieved 94%.

- 3) Application of the Corporation Seal – Governors queried the need and relevance of the use of the Corporation Seal in modern business. The Clerk explained that its use tended to be for certain contracts only, and that it was a requirement for its use to be reported to the Board.
- 4) Link Governors – The Clerk reported that Dave Clark had recently agreed to take on the role of Link Governor for Careers. Rebecca Hamilton advised during this item that she would be willing to take on the role of Link Governor for Maths & English.
- 5) Remuneration Committee – Annual Report 2020/21 – Governors noted the annual report from the Remuneration Committee. There were no questions or concerns raised.
- 6) AoC Code of Good Governance – Governors noted the revised code that was circulated by the Clerk on 4 October 2021.

7 Committee Chairs' Briefing Items:

- Employment Policy Committee – The Chair reported that the draft flexible working policy had been reviewed and now included a section on home working following the experiences of the Covid lockdowns; legal advice now confirmed that the College's approach was appropriate. The policy would be shared with the College Leadership Team and the unions for feedback. The Committee had also reviewed the usual curriculum impact report, the annual HR report, staff development review, DBS compliance report and Health & Safety Report. The gender pay gap report was reviewed noting a reducing gap from 18% in 2020 to 13.7% in 2021. The HR Strategy was reviewed and approved, covering the next 3 years.
- Finance & General Purposes Committee - The Committee Chair reported that the Committee had reviewed the preliminary financial results for the last year and the funding report, both on the agenda for this meeting. Additionally, the Committee reviewed the initial proposals for the future of the IT provision for the College, noting that the current management contract would end on 31 July 2022. The Committee gave its approval to management in appointing a new IT Services Head of Department to manage the process moving forward. At the present time a hybrid solution was being considered, bringing elements of the IT service back in house, but contracting with third-parties for the more specialised areas of service.
- Performance Review & Quality Committee – The Clerk reported on behalf of the Committee Chair that the Performance Data and KPI results for 2020/21 had been reviewed but were still emerging at the time of the meeting, with the latest figures on the agenda for this meeting; performance levels for 2020/21 were expected to be down. Apprenticeships and ESOL both remained particular concerns and the Committee would continue to receive regular reports from these 2 areas. The Committee was delighted with the "Good" inspection result for the nursery from Ofsted following its visit on 24 August 2021.
- Search & Governance Committee – the Chair commented on the excellent attendance rate of 94% for last year and thanked Governors for their attendance and engagement at meetings. Governors completed 3 surveys over the summer period and the Committee had reviewed in detail the results and feedback received. One or two areas had been noted for the Clerk to follow-up in due course. Governors were thanked for taking the time to complete the surveys.

The Chair noted that comments had been received advising of the problems governors had experienced when trying to access SharePoint. IT had been asked to look at this issue and, once resolved, the Clerk would issue guidance. **ACTION-CLERK**

The updates were noted.

8 Principal's Strategy Report

This item was deemed "Confidential."

9 Strategic Targets 2020/21 – Final Review

Governors noted the detailed analysis of the previous year's targets. Governors considered that the reporting was perhaps too detailed, and that future reporting should focus on the main areas of concern. The Principal explained that the targets for 2020/21 were heavily affected by the Covid pandemic resulting in the failure to achieve on a number of targets. For 2021/22, a reduced number of targets had been created.

Governors queried target 1.1e relating to the destinations of leavers. The Principal explained the difficulties of obtaining this data, and its growing importance with the new Skills Bill focusing on the destinations of students as they move into their careers. The Principal reported that the College may consider using a third-party organisation to collate this data from former students.

Governors reviewed target 3.8 regarding digital communications and noted that more work was required in this area. The Principal advised that the College would progress this area which had moved positively as a result of the pandemic. The JISC tool would enable individuals to assess their own needs and plan for future training. The Assistant Principal Funding & Performance detailed the new hardware that had been purchased by the College over recent months, including whiteboards and laptops as curriculum areas looked to make more use of IT both in the classroom and with remote teaching.

Governors discussed target 4.11 regarding contribution levels of 48% and if those areas producing lower levels of contribution should be discontinued but accepted that some areas generated good interest and allowed for marketing opportunities for the College. The Principal explained that contribution analysis allowed for increased control over budgets and closer scrutiny when recruitment levels were lower than expected. The pandemic had greatly affected efficiencies and caused increased costs due to the need for reduced class sizes in many areas. The Assistant Principal advised that a review of curriculum plan against actuals would take place after the October half-term period. Governors asked about the level of accuracy and confidence in the calculations for the contribution rates. The Vice Principal Corporate Services advised that the accuracy in the calculations had improved greatly over recent months and that in time the introduction of a new finance system would allow for more details and further improvements in the calculations.

The report was noted.

The Chair called for a break in the meeting at 10.00 am

The meeting re-commenced at 10.08 am

10 Preliminary Financial Results 2020/21

The Vice Principal Corporate Services reported on the good year-end position for the finances. A surplus of £600k had been generated against a deficit budget for the year, and bank balances stood at £9m. The financial health score was "Outstanding." The Vice Principal reminded the Board that the results were preliminary and subject to change following the audit which was currently underway.

Governors were pleased to note the financial performance of Apprenticeships during a very difficult year due to the pandemic.

Governors commented on the performance of Employer Engagement. The Vice Principal explained that this area of activity had been hit greatly during the pandemic but was currently recovering well.

Governors asked about the effects of pension schemes in the accounts. The Vice Principal advised that no increases to employer contribution rates were expected for 2021/22.

Governors thanked the Vice Principal for the clear and concise report.

The report was noted.

11 Funding Outturn 2020/21 and Indicative Numbers 2021/22

The Assistant Principal Funding & Performance advised that the final submission of data would take place the following week and so there could be some late changes to the data in the report under review. For the new academic year, enrolments were still being processed but at this stage appeared to be good. An audit had been undertaken the previous week on CPCA AEB activity with only minor issues identified.

Governors commented on the internal audit report regarding the apprenticeship provision, asking if the error rate noted in the report of 7.23% was acceptable. The Assistant Principal advised that he was concerned with the error rate, partly caused as a result of the work-around procedures instigated during the pandemic.

Governors were concerned with the risk of potential clawback in funding if paperwork was found to be incomplete and unable to be substantiated. The Principal reported that audits could be requested at anytime by the funding bodies and so it was important for the paperwork and administration to be up-to-date and complete at all times. Various committees (Audit, PR&Q, F&GP) were aware of the current difficulties within the Apprenticeships department and action was being taken to address these.

Governors were interested to know if the errors were caused by the system or those using the systems. The Assistant Principal commented that individuals' interpretation of the many requirements sometimes caused confusion when assessing how best to process and complete the required data.

Governors were pleased that it was the College that commissioned its own audit and that action was being taken to address the issues. Governors asked for this to be noted within the Risk Register and for the external auditors to be made aware. The Vice Principal Corporate Services advised that the external auditors would review all internal audit reports as part of the annual review.

The report was noted.

12 Learning Strategy Annual Review

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality explained that the new version of the strategy which included material and themes from a number of current documents focused on the role of the teacher and assessment. Seven principles were included to guide teachers. The strategy had been reviewed by the Performance Review & Quality Committee at its meeting held on 22 September 2021; the Committee had recommended the strategy to the Board for approval.

Governors were concerned that there was no direct reference to Safeguarding within the strategy and asked managers to review the sixth principle where this could perhaps be included.

ACTION-VPCQ/APSS

The Learning Strategy was approved (noting the possible late amendment to the sixth principle, detailed above).

13 Applewood Nursery Update Report

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality was very pleased to report the successful outcome of the Ofsted inspection of the nursery on 24 August 2021, resulting in a “Good” grading.

The Vice Principal reported that there had been a recent outbreak of hand, foot & mouth amongst the children in the nursery; this was a notifiable disease and Public Health England had been informed. The nursery was allowed to remain open and additional cleaning had been actioned.

The Chair offered her thanks to those involved in the “Good” result for the nursery. The Chair commented on the recruitment posters around the campus for the nursery that were displaying slightly misleading information. The Vice Principal would review the posters.

ACTION-VPCQ

The Board approved the removal of the nursery from the Risk Register and noted that an annual update report on the nursery would be reviewed by the PR&Q Committee.

14 Current Performance Data and KPIs 2020/21 (Emerging Outcomes)

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality advised that 23 achievement results remained outstanding in the report but would be completed in the Overall College Self-Assessment Review report currently being compiled.

Governors noted a number of KPIs rated as “Red” relating to delayed student exams and lower grades received as a result of the interruptions caused by the Covid pandemic and asked about the plans in place to ensure current students would not be affected by the on-going issues of Covid. The Vice Principal advised that the College had been liaising with all awarding bodies with regard to their plans for assessment and grading in 2021/22. Guidance relating to GCSE and A Level courses had already been issued. Some of the awarding bodies had recently announced that their courses would use assessment for the current year. All students were regularly reviewed by teaching staff and given feedback on their current progress; this process was managed by senior staff via the area performance reviews.

Governors asked about benchmarking and how current performance could be assessed with other colleges at the current time. The Principal explained that league tables had been suspended for 2 years due to Covid. The general consensus across the sector was that teacher assessed grades within schools were higher than in previous years with the AoC noting concerns from colleges about this. The lack of comparative information on Apprenticeships and Functional Skills was a concern. The College was looking to join with 4 or 5 colleges to informally share data, accepting that there would be difficulties with such a small sample size.

Governors asked if it was possible to separate out the effects of Covid from the data to identify other issues that may be occurring. The Vice Principal assured Governors that all areas were being closely monitored and focused on ESOL as an example, where performance and retention was a particular concern resulting in this area now being moved into Support to Improve.

The report was noted.

15 Hearing the Learner Voice

The Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality noted the low return rate for various surveys during the 2020/21 year, as a result of students not being on campus. Responses to surveys already undertaken for 2021/22 had been much higher. For this year, the use of small focus groups from various areas would be used to gain feedback from students. The Chair commented on the need for managers and the Board to be aware of the views of students, particularly during an inspection as Ofsted would make direct contact with students for their views.

Governors discussed the need for ease and accessibility when completing surveys by students and the importance of hearing their “voice.”

The report was noted.

16 Risk Register Review

The Vice Principal Corporate Services provided an update against Risk 2020 (2) Covid; the number of students currently absent due to Covid-19 was 20, with the national picture for this age group increasing. Local authorities were making contact with all schools and colleges to discuss the actions in place to manage the situation.

The Chair of the Audit Committee thanked Governors for their attendance at the Risk Workshop on 15 September 2021. Follow-up work was now required, such as a review of risk appetite, risk scoring and residual risk, all of which would be undertaken in due course.

The report was noted.

17 Gender Pay Gap Report

The Gender Pay Gap report was considered by the Employment Policy Committee at its meeting on 6 October 2021 and was presented to the Board for information. There were no questions or concerns raised.

The report was noted.

18 CWA Public Value Statement – Update

The Clerk explained that the Public Value Statement had been updated to reflect the recent changes in the College’s strategic ambitions. There were no questions or concerns raised.

Governors approved the Public Value Statement for publication.

19 Any Other Business

- i. Learning Walks – Governors were invited to undertake learning walks (previously suspended during the pandemic) and to make contact in the first instance with the Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality who would make the necessary arrangements.

ACTION-Governors

20 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, 8 December 2021 at 8.30 am.

The meeting closed at 11.00 am