

WQE & Regent College Group

Corporation Meeting 15 November 2023, 17:00, Room G01,
University Road campus

Members of the Corporation in attendance:

Philip Parkinson (Chair), Orhan Ahmed, Joyce Black, Bernadette Green, Neil McGhee, Nikki O'Brien, Julia Pastuszak, Jim Phillips, Sarah Thomson, Paul Wilson, & Jimmy Zachariah

Other attendees:

Frances Bettsworth (prospective Teaching Staff Governor), Tia Brookes (prospective Student Governor), Carolyn Davies, Sarah Oldfield, Tim Rogers, Sukhdeep Sangha, Donna Trusler, Rachel Middleton

Apologies:

Andrew Jackson, Sofie Dadge, Aaron Winterton

MINUTES

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting including Frances Bettsworth (prospective Teaching Staff Governor) and Tia Brookes (prospective Student Governor).

Two Governors who had taken sabbaticals were welcomed back to the Corporation – Jim Phillips and Jimmy Zachariah.

Apologies were received from Sofie Dadge, Andrew Jackson and Aaron Winterton.

The Chair welcomed the speaker, Sukhdeep Sangha (Curriculum Area Leader – English, Film and Foreign Languages).

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in agenda items.

3. Minutes and matters arising– Paper 001

The minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 04 October 2023 were approved as a correct record subject to a correction highlighting the fact that one of the Governors had raised a number of questions in advance of the meeting and that some of these had been subsequently pursued with members of the ELT. The Chair noted that where Governors unable to physically attend Corporation meetings had sent questions to feed into the meeting, that these should be referenced in meeting proceedings in future.

The action list was reviewed.

GOVERNOR BRIEFING

4. **Curriculum Briefing** – Sukhdeep Sangha (Curriculum Leader for English, Film and Languages) – Presentation

Sukhdeep briefed Governors on a range of topics relating to her curriculum areas:

- Pre- College merger context
- Post- College merger challenges
- 2023 results: strengths and areas for focus
- Strategic questions being considered about teaching and learning
- Cross-curricular actions

Governors asked Sukhdeep about Artificial Intelligence and the opportunities and threats which this posed in her curriculum areas. Staff are able to identify fairly easily where plagiarism has occurred or where AI-assisted submissions have been made. Staff are undertaking CPD on AI and are considering opportunities for teaching and learning as well as how to teach students to critically evaluate AI-generated content.

Sarah Oldfield confirmed that the Digital Strategy Group within College had been looking into ways in which AI could possibly reduce workload as well as creative uses to kickstart students' work. One of the tools being investigated is Teachermatic. The College will be looking to establish exam boards' perspectives on AI as soon as possible.

The presentation will be shared with Governors via GovernorHub following the meeting. **Action RM**

The Chair thanked Sukhdeep for such a comprehensive oversight. One of the Governors observed that there had been clear progress made across various curriculum areas since she had visited Sukhdeep as part of the Governor Insight visits programme a couple of years ago, where Sukhdeep had highlighted some of the developmental issues, which had since been significantly progressed.

The Chair confirmed that he had participated in the SFCA webinar focusing on AI and recommended this to the Corporation as a recording. Shamir Ghumra confirmed he had also participated in the session and commended it to fellow Governors. The Corporation concluded it wanted AI to be a regular focus on future Corporation agendas as new developments are occurring every week. One of the Governors commended the work of Tony Parkin on AI in education.

OVERSIGHT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

5. **Principal's Update** – (Presentation) – *For information and questions*

Paul Wilson

The Principal's Update covered the following themes:

- Student attendance figures and comparison to Leicester, Leicestershire and national figures
- Teaching staff pay update, being applied from November 2023 and backdated to 01 September 2023
 - An increase of between 6.5% and 8.44% on all main scale pay points
 - A 6.5% across the board increase for all teachers above point 1 on the spine, including those on leadership scales.
 - 8.44% for point 1 on the spine
 - A 6.5% increase on all relevant allowances
- Support Staff pay update being applied in November 2023 and backdated to 01 September 2023
 - An across the board increase of 6.5% on the NJC pay spine and London and fringe allowances
 - The incorporation of the Support Staff Standards Payment (SSSP) into the NJC pay spine to provide an additional £390 to basic pay for all staff - incorporated into the basic pay spine from Sept 2023 and replaces Winter lump sum payments
 - Support staff on the lowest pay point on the NJC pay spine will continue to be paid above the statutory minimum wage.
- Estates plan update
- Successful Open Day – very positive atmosphere across both campuses, 500+ visitors, exemplary student ambassadors
- Productive annual strategic conversation with the ESFA on 09 November 2023
- Student residential trip to Iceland
- Remembrance event

Governors asked the Principal whether there were future compression issues relating to the revised pay awards being higher at the lower end of scales. The Principal confirmed this was being considered by SFCA nationally and it was difficult for the College to tackle this risk outside of that even though it is an increasing challenge.

The presentation will be shared with Governors on GovernorHub post-meeting.

Action RM

6. Strategic Development Plan 2023-2026 Context Updates – Paper 002 – For information and discussion

Paul Wilson

Governors noted the paper covering areas such as:

- Vision, mission and values
- Reminder of the College's context including demographics, curriculum and the local education offer
- Skills and workforce priorities
- National policy update
- Funding, financial context and resources
- Sustainability
- Workforce and people
- Technology

- Governance
- Other links to the Strategic Development Plan

The Principal confirmed that his next strategic presentation to the Corporation would focus on looking at the 2021-2024 plan, reflecting on priorities and RAG-rating these. This will prepare the Corporation for the focus of the Governor Conference in Spring 2024.

Paper 002 has been redacted as it has been considered confidential by the Corporation.

OVERSIGHT OF STUDENT OUTCOMES & EXPERIENCES

7. Matters arising from the Student Outcomes Task & Finish Group meeting 10/10/23

Summary of headlines from Joyce Black

Joyce thanked Tim Rogers for producing papers 003 and 004 for the meeting.

Joyce summarised the discussions held at the Student Outcomes Task & Finish Group meeting on 10 October 2023:

- Feedback on the impact of last year's identified priorities and interventions
- Identifying actions which will be rolled forward into 2023/24
- The whole college and subject-level approaches to achievement and comparison to national achievement rates
- Looking for 1% achievement gains in some areas as part of the College's ambitious targets
- Agreement of overall achievement target of 86% this year
- Consideration of additional Student Voice activity to enhance the learner experience
- Data dashboard implementation and usage
- Better deployment of funds to enhance student support
- Actions identified around teaching, learning and assessment
- Discussion of specific groups' performance – Arab students, students who have been in receipt of Pupil Premium

7.1 Summary of work undertaken in 2022/23 and outcomes, and priorities for 2023/24 – Paper 003 – *For information only*

7.2 Additional data tables requested – Paper 004 – *For supplementary information only*

Tim Rogers

8. Work experience update – Paper 005– *For information and questions*

Andrew Jackson

The Principal focused on the main highlights of the paper in Andrew's absence, outlining how the College benchmarked itself against the Gatsby Benchmarks as well as the ongoing development of the Young Professionals Programme. Governors noted the 93% engagement rate with work experience, noting the improvement in this area and the impact of the LEBC in helping to facilitate this.

The Principal confirmed that the College was about to appoint some additional Young Professionals Co-ordinator roles to build capacity further.

OVERSIGHT OF FINANCE, RESOURCES & ASSETS

9. Monthly management accounts (September 2023) – Paper 006 - *For information and questions*

Carolyn Davies

The Corporation noted the monthly management accounts covering two months of the new financial year.

10. Absence Management Policy –Paper 007 - *For approval*

Carolyn Davies

Carolyn outlined the fact that the draft policy had been consulted upon with leadership groups and had also been through trade unions. Carolyn reminded Governors that should the appeals process ever be invoked, then this would involve members of the Corporation.

The Corporation had a full discussion about the management of staff absence.

Governors asked questions about whether legal advice had been sought on the policy, with Carolyn responding that it was based on a fairly standard approach and the College's HR professional had inputted fully to changes. In addition the was discussion on whether absence trends, rather than individual cases, were also monitored by middle or senior leaders and whether absences were monitored and tracked through a data dashboard. It was noted that daily summaries of teaching staff absence cover needs/plans are shared with middle and senior leaders.

The Corporation considered how staff absence data is reported ongoing to the Board. It was agreed that future updates on staff absence will be included within the reports to the Corporation on the Wellbeing Strategy.

The Corporation approved the policy.

PAY & CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

11. Staff Re-organisation Policy – Paper 008 – *For approval*

Paul Wilson

The existing policy had been reviewed. No substantive changes were proposed.

The Corporation re-approved the policy.

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT GOVERNANCE

12. Governor appointments

Joyce Black

12.1 Teaching Staff Governor

Frances Bettsworth - Teacher (Business, Economics and Finance) was nominated for the role as Teaching Staff Governor. She was unopposed and was proposed to the Corporation for approval in role, to serve a four-year term of office.

Frances was invited to introduce herself to the Corporation.
The Corporation approved Frances' appointment. The Clerk to Corporation will pursue the next steps of Frances' induction, at a meeting on 29 November 2023.

12.2 Student Governor (academic year)

The Corporation was introduced to Tia Brookes, prospective Student Governor. Tia's appointment as academic year Student Governor was approved by the Corporation.

The Clerk will tailor an induction for Tia before the next Corporation meeting.

Action RM

Joyce informed the Corporation that nominations for the role as Support Staff Governor had closed at 5pm on 15 November 2023 and that two candidates had been nominated. An update and a prospective Support Staff Governor will be recommended to the Corporation at its December 2023 meeting.

13. Update on External Review of Governance– *For approval*

Joyce Black

Joyce outlined the final steps undertaken in arriving at a shortlist of two providers of external reviews of governance. The recommendation to the Corporation is to appoint Rockborn as the chosen ERG provider. The Corporation approved the recommendation, noted the commitment to a compliance-based approach as well as the value-added elements requested by the Corporation. The Corporation noted the fee for the ERG and asked how this compared with the other shortlisted provider. Joyce confirmed that the desk-based research exercise was likely to commence in December or early January and that an operational plan will be collated and Governors notified well in advance of when they will be required to participate in surveys and short interviews. Joyce confirmed the output of the ERG will be presented to the Corporation at its June 2024 meeting.

Action RM: Confirm to Rockborn the successful award of the ERG contract.

14. Governor Insights programme – live

Joyce Black

Joyce reminded the Corporation that all invitations to undertake Governor insight visits had been issued by the Clerk. She encouraged all Governors to firm up meeting dates with Curriculum or Support areas and to ensure that these are completed by the Easter 2024 deadline.

15. Verbal update on the Vaughan Endowment Fund and Thornton Fund (Vaughan Fund Committee meeting – 15/11/23)

Philip Parkinson

Philip reminded Governors of the history of the Vaughan Endowment Fund and the Thornton Fund.

The Vaughan Fund Committee meeting convened immediately prior to the Corporation meeting. It considered applications from eleven applicants – former WQE who had successfully progressed into their first year of Higher Education.

The Committee decided to award all eleven applicants a sum of £800 each.

The Committee also considered an award for the sole applicant for the Thornton Fund. This fund is to support an applicant who has progressed into HE to study Mathematics. An award of £500 was made to the applicant from the Thornton Fund and was topped up with a £300 contribution from the Vaughan Fund, meaning the recipient will also receive £800 in total.

The Corporation noted the decisions of the Vaughan Fund Committee.

ROUND-UP

16. Any Other Business

- The Corporation was asked to note and act on a request from a Governor to ensure that presentations are LDD-compliant to ensure Corporation meetings are fully inclusive of a range of individuals' needs in future.
- Sarah Oldfield confirmed there would be two student performances on 13 December 2023 at Studio 79. Governors noted the date and acknowledged there was a date clash with the next Corporation meeting, making it too difficult to attend.
- Governors asked Donna Trusler whether her team had the resources needed to fulfil the Corporation's commitment to safeguarding and student wellbeing. She confirmed this was the case and thanked the Corporation for posing this question ongoing.

17. Confidentiality

Subject to discussions during the meeting, the Corporation considered Paper 002 to be confidential.

18. Next Meeting

Wednesday 13 December 2023, 16:00, Room G01, University Road campus

Action List

Actions arising from 15 November 2023 Corporation meeting	Who is responsible?	Date for completion
Share presentations with Governors post-meeting via GovernorHub	RM	ASAP
Organise Student Governor induction	RM	ASAP
Confirm award of contract for ERG to Rockborn	RM	ASAP
Actions arising from 04 October 2023 Corporation meeting	Who is responsible?	Date for completion
Update on sexual abuse action plan to be tabled at January 2024 Corporation meeting	DT	By 24/01/24
Actions arising from 24 May 2023 Corporation meeting	Who is responsible?	Date for completion
Amended - NMcG to contact Carolyn Davies to support	NMcG, CD	As soon as possible

College work on decarbonisation		
Set a specific target for GCSE attendance for 2023/24 and to report on this to the Corporation	AJ	At appropriate points on the 2023/24 Business Plan
Provide a bar chart outlining the spread of attendance percentages, as part of future attendance reports to the Corporation.	AJ	At appropriate points on the 2023/24 Business Plan
Table discussion about Artificial Intelligence on a Corporation agenda	RM	At an appropriate point on the 2023/24 Business Plan
Standing item	Who is responsible?	Date for completion
To refer any matter which could be externally assured to the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee	All Governors	

The meeting closed at 19:10

Signature
Chair of the Corporation

Date: