

Heart of Yorkshire Education Group Corporation ('Corporation')

Board of Governors

Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 October 2023 ('Meeting')

Present:

Luke Aaron, Faye Banks, Ruth Baxter, Nigel Brook (until minute 10), Dmitry Fedotov, Tony Jackson, Jayne King, George Kilner, Andrew McConnell (**Chair**), Mohammed Ayub (from minute 3), David Powell, Martyn Shaw, Vijay Teeluck, Neil Warren and Sam Wright
(Principal)

In attendance:

Group Executive Director of Student Experience and Support (**EDSES**), Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources (**EDFR**), Group Executive Director of People (**EDP**), Group Executive Director of Curriculum and Quality Standards (**EDCQS**), Group Executive Director of External Relations and Development (**EDERD**) and the Head of Governance and Legal Services (**Clerk**)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

- 1.1. The Chair reported that due notice of the Meeting had been given in accordance with the Corporation's Instrument and Articles and its Standing Orders and that a quorum was present. Accordingly, the Chair declared the Meeting open.
- 1.2. The Chair noted that the following members had given their apologies:
 - 1.2.1. Bea Bassford.
 - 1.2.2. Claire Corneille.
 - 1.2.3. Brian Fisher.

2. Declarations of interest

- 2.1. The Chair noted the following declarations of interest:
 - 2.1.1. That he had an interest in agenda item 8(ii) regarding his appraisal.

2.1.2. That those members being appointed to Committee positions had an interest in agenda item 8(iii).

2.2. The Clerk advised regarding the attendance, quorum and voting considerations.

2.3. The Chair asked for further declarations of interest. None were given.

3. Appointment of Yubi Mohammed

3.1. The Chair noted a slight change to the order of the Meeting. He explained that the Search and Governance Committee had, at its last meeting, interviewed Mohammed Ayub as a potential candidate for the Board and had made a recommendation for his appointment. He then gave the requisite information regarding the candidate in accordance with the Search and Governance Committee's Terms of Reference.

3.2. The Board considered the candidate's appointment and concluded that he was a strong candidate with skills and experience which would strengthen the Board.

3.3. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT Mohammed Ayub be appointed to the Board for four years with a one-year probationary period.

3.4. Mohammed Ayub joined the Meeting and introductions were made.

4. Minutes of Meeting

IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the meeting of 4 July 2023 be approved.

5. Matters Arising

5.1. The Clerk noted the following in relation to the outstanding matters arising from the meeting of 4 July 2023:

5.1.1. On matter arising 2, the Reserves Strategy to be presented to the Finance, People and Resources Committee had been postponed until the Autumn.

5.1.2. On matter arising 4, plans were confirmed for transport support for Selby College for 2023/24.

5.1.3. On matter arising 16, EDI KPIs and reporting mechanisms were to be developed so more regular updates are received by the Board. The EDP confirmed her team was planning an engagement campaign to encourage more staff to disclose their EDI data then the College could set improvement KPIs.

5.1.4. On matter arising 3 from the confidential minutes, members asked the EDP to conduct a deep dive into the number of staff leaving within their first year of employment and report back to the Finance, People and Resources Committee. It was noted this action had been postponed until 2024.

6. Chair's Business

6.1. The Chair noted the following:

6.1.1. That he and the Board would like to give its congratulations and thanks to everyone involved in securing the Ofsted 'Good' rating.

6.1.2. The lessons learned from the appraisal process and the improvements to be made.

7. Student Update

7.1. The student members noted the following:

7.1.1. That introductory Students' Union meetings had been held.

7.1.2. That Ofsted had spoken to Students' Union members who had given good feedback.

7.1.3. That an LGBTQ+ officer had been appointed who had started a club.

7.2. Members:

7.2.1. Asked whether members of the established Wakefield College and Selby College Students' Unions were mentoring the newly established

Castleford Students' Union. The student members confirmed and outlined the details.

7.2.2. Asked whether there was anything the student governors would like the Board to know. The student members noted that they were happy at the College and the staff were kind but that they would like more rooms with computers and laptops for online lessons. The Executive members present agreed to consider these issues outside of the Meeting.

7.2.3. Fed back on the earlier student engagement session noting the following:

7.2.3.1. There had been a good student turnout.

7.2.3.2. The students had given positive feedback including that they felt safe at the College.

7.2.3.3. That they had reported some areas for improvement including some timetabling gaps, in the case of one student, a desire for more career advice and issues with bus services to College.

7.2.4. Asked whether the College could advocate to the bus provider for improvements. The EDFR explained that the bus provider would only run the most lucrative routes and that the College had engaged a private provider to help ease issues. Members agreed to speak to Councillor, Matthew Morley for assistance.

7.3. The Executive members present agreed to investigate the areas for improvement raised outside of the Meeting.

8. Principal's Update

8.1. The Principal shared a presentation and noted the following:

8.1.1. The events which had taken place since the last meeting.

8.1.2. The areas of focus for the coming twelve months relating to staff, the student experience, safeguarding, sustainability, resource management,

curriculum planning, stakeholder relations, the achievement of new targets, student outcomes, TLA and digital strategies, and continuing preparations for Ofsted.

8.1.3. That recruitment was strong but an increase in GCSE re-sits were a significant challenge in terms of staff and accommodation.

8.2. Members:

8.2.1. Asked why there had been an increase in GCSE English and Maths re-sits. The EDFR explained that there had been a shift in grade boundaries and that this may occur again in future.

8.2.2. Asked whether the College could cope with increases in GCSE English and Maths re-sits in future. The Principal confirmed this was an annual issue with which the College was able to deal, despite the difficulties it caused.

8.3. The proposed strategic objective KPIs for 2022/23.

8.4. Members:

8.4.1. Asked whether strategic objective one should be expanded to meet, not only the needs of the area, but national needs. The Principal explained that many local needs were also national, the EDERD noted that this was captured by the Annual Accountability Statement and the EDFR pointed out that distance learning provision had a national reach. Members were satisfied with strategic objective one as drafted.

8.4.2. Asked whether the KPIs relating to strategic objective two were achievable. The Principal confirmed she was confident they were.

8.4.3. Asked how realistic the College's goal was to self-assess as 'outstanding' by 2024/25. The Principal noted she was confident given the recent Ofsted inspection report.

- 8.4.4.** In relation to strategic objective three, asked Executive members present to reconsider the target for high performing, motivated and satisfied staff which they considered might be unrealistically high.
- 8.4.5.** In relation to strategic objective four, asked whether the College might secure an ESFA financial health grade of 'outstanding' within the timeframe given. The EDFR noted that the economic climate was too uncertain to comment.
- 8.4.6.** In relation to strategic objective five, asked for a target date for net zero. The Executive team agreed to action this.
- 8.5.** Outlined the results of the College's recent Ofsted inspection noting:
- 8.5.1.** That it had been a full inspection rather than the expected monitoring visit.
- 8.5.2.** That all provision types had been assessed 'good'.
- 8.5.3.** That all key judgements had been 'good'.
- 8.5.4.** The areas for improvement which had been highlighted and the steps that would be taken to address these.
- 8.5.5.** That the skills sub judgement had been assessed as 'strong' which was a rare achievement. However, Ofsted had requested further information and a return to College due to evidence they had not collected.
- 8.5.6.** The next steps following on from the inspection.
- 8.5.7.** That she was proud of the hard work done by everyone involved in the inspection.
- 8.6.** Members:
- 8.6.1.** Explained that a small group had met with the inspectors noting that the feedback had been very positive especially in relation to the skills judgement, safeguarding and staff commitment.

- 8.6.2.** Asked whether the specific departments which were criticised had been identified. The Principal confirmed they had and that improvement plans would be put in place. Members noted that the Quality Improvement Plan would be used to drive improvement which the Curriculum and Quality Committee would oversee.
- 8.6.3.** Asked the Principal to update the Board regarding the final skills sub judgement grade.
- 8.6.4.** Congratulated the Executive team and everyone at the College for the achievement.

9. Finance Report

- 9.1.** The Chair noted a change to the schedule to ensure the Chair of the Audit Committee, who was soon to leave the Meeting, was available to comment on this item.
- 9.2.** In relation to the provisional outturn 2022/23, the EDFR noted:
 - 9.2.1.** The much-improved outturn position against the member approved budget and the causes of this.
 - 9.2.2.** That most financial targets had been met but for the target relating to the staff cost ratio which was close and the College was near to an ESFA health score rating of 'outstanding'.
- 9.3.** Members expressed their satisfaction at the improved position.
- 9.4.** The EDFR outlined the debts written off during 2022/23.
- 9.5.** The Chair of the Audit Committee asked for a breakdown of write-offs by college.
- 9.6.** The EDFR outlined the waivers given from the Financial Regulations during 2022/23 and the reasons.
- 9.7.** Members:

- 9.7.1. Asked the EDFR to keep a record of those he turns down in future to enable him and the Board to reflect on the results.
- 9.7.2. Asked how the Board can be assured the College is receiving value for money. The EDFR noted that where urgent the College sometimes used previous suppliers with good reputations to ensure quality but this had been primarily a result of the merger with Selby College and waivers would dramatically decrease in 2023/24.
- 9.7.3. The value at which Board approval would be required. The EDFR noted this was £250,000 which might provide Members with some comfort.
- 9.8. The EDFR gave an update on learner recruitment which he noted was strong. He explained that there was the possibility of exceptional in-year funding and additional help in 2024/25.
- 9.9. Members asked for an update on learner recruitment and associated funding at the next Board meeting.
- 9.10. The Lead Governor for Finance noted that he was assured regarding the College's position following receipt of additional funding.
- 9.11. *Please see the confidential minutes.*

10. Emerging Risks

Members agreed that risks had been and were to be discussed throughout the Meeting.

11. Outcomes for Learners and Feedback 2022/23

11.1. The EDCQS noted:

- 11.1.1. That there had been significant increases in retention and overall achievement compared with the previous year although A-Level high grades had declined which was a national issue.
- 11.1.2. That SEND students achieved high retention and pass rates and there had been strong progression.

- 11.1.3.** That apprenticeship achievement had seen a substantial improvement.
 - 11.1.4.** That there was an issue with high grades for Maths and she outlined the plans to improve this.
 - 11.1.5.** That functional skills English and Maths achievement had improved across all levels.
 - 11.1.6.** That HE retention was good but pass rates had slightly declined. She explained the reasons for this which were legacy issues related to the merger which would not continue.
 - 11.1.7.** That fewer students had passed foundation degrees but this had been caused by student specific issues.
 - 11.1.8.** That professional judgements throughout the year had been very accurate.
 - 11.1.9.** That there had been strong internal progression and destinations for 16-18 students.
 - 11.1.10.** That the pastoral curriculum had been fully embedded at Selby College.
- 11.2. Members:**
- 11.2.1.** Asked whether GCSE re-sits pulled down the overall success rate. The EDCQS explained it should have the opposite effect.
 - 11.2.2.** Asked what improvements had been made regarding engineering and construction apprenticeships. The EDERD explained a more streamlined approach had been taken to get apprentices through the process.
- 11.3.** The Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee noted that the Committee would keep learner outcomes under review, that the Committee was aware of the matters which needed more careful attention and that he was assured of the quality of teaching and learning at the College especially given it had secured an Ofsted grade of 'good'. The Chair added that he was pleased that the merger had

not knocked the College off track and that, instead, there had been further improvements.

12. Safeguarding Annual Report 2022/23 and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

12.1. The EDSES:

12.1.1. outlined the highlights of the Safeguarding Annual Report including:

12.1.1.1. Ofsted's verification of the high quality of safeguarding.

12.1.1.2. The focus on online monitoring.

12.1.1.3. That prevent training had been standardised across the Group following merger.

12.1.1.4. The challenges faced including increased numbers of looked after children and young adult carers, counselling staffing issues and a complicated regulatory environment.

12.1.1.5. That support remained at a high level but had plateaued.

12.1.1.6. Outlined the minor changes to the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for 2023/24.

12.2. Members:

12.2.1. Asked whether the College had mental health first aiders. The EDSES confirmed.

12.2.2. Asked whether further thought been given to online pre-recruitment checks. The EDP confirmed but explained she was waiting for guidance on this somewhat controversial issue.

12.2.3. Asked whether steps were being taken to address lower training rates at Castleford. The EDSES confirmed.

12.3. The Lead Governor for Safeguarding thanked members for reading the latest update to Keeping Children Safe in Education and thanked the EDSES and safeguarding team for its continued hard work and Ofsted achievement.

12.4. IT WAS RESOLVED TO approve the Safeguarding Annual Report 2022/23 and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures 2023/24 subject to a minor amendment flagged by a staff governor.

13. Governance update

13.1. The Clerk:

13.1.1. Noted the updated calendar of meeting for 2023/24.

13.1.2. Outlined the key takeaways from the appraisal of members and the Chair and the governance improvements to be made.

13.1.3. Outlined the Committee appointment recommendations made by the Search and Governance Committee and their rationale, noting that Brian Fisher had not yet consented to joining the Curriculum and Quality Committee and that, therefore, no decision would be required in this regard.

13.1.4. Outlined the Search and Governance Committee's recommendation for an external governance reviewer.

13.1.5. Explained the changes made to the Instrument and Articles, Standing Orders and Search and Governance Committee Terms of Reference recommended for adoption by the Search and Governance Committee.

13.1.6. Outlined the Chair's Action recently exercised in relation to an application for funding for a de-escalation room for SEND students.

13.1.7. IT WAS RESOLVED TO:

13.1.7.1. Appoint Faye Banks as a member of the Audit Committee.

13.1.7.2. Appoint Tony Jackson as a member of the Finance, People and Resources Committee.

13.1.7.3. Appoint Faye Banks to the position of Senior Independent Director.

13.1.7.4. Appoint the Association of Colleges as the College's external governance reviewer for 2023/24.

14. Briefing Papers

The Clerk noted that no questions had been submitted relating to the briefing papers but that, should any be received, they would be answered by email.

15. Review of Effectiveness of Meeting and Identification of Emerging Risk

15.1. The Chair noted that emerging risks had been discussed and invited governors to comment on the effectiveness of the Meeting via email to the Clerk.

15.2. The Chair declared the Meeting closed.



Signed Date 12/12/2023

Actions

No.	Minute	Details	Deadline	Responsibility
1.	5.1.1	A Reserves Strategy should be presented to the FP&R Committee	Autumn Term	EDFR
2.	5.1.3	EDI KPIs and reporting mechanisms should be developed so more regular updates can be received by the Board	The next Board meeting	EDP
3.	5.1.4	Members asked the EDP to conduct a deep dive into the number of staff leaving within their first year of employment and report back to the Finance, People	The first F,P&R Committee of 2024	EDP

		and Resources Committee		
4.	7.2.4	Members agreed to speak to Councillor, Matthew Morley regarding bus routes	The next Board meeting	Members
5.	8.4.4	In relation to strategic objective three, members asked Executive members present to reconsider the target for high performing, motivated and satisfied staff	The next Board meeting	EDP
6.	8.6.3	Members asked the Principal to update them on the final skills sub judgement	ASAP	The Principal
7.	9.5	The Chair of the Audit Committee asked for a	The next Board meeting	EDFR

		breakdown of write-offs by college		
8.	9.7.1	Members asked the EDFR to keep a record of those write offs he turns down in future to enable him and the Board to reflect on the results.	The next Board meeting	EDFR
9.	9.9	Members asked for an update on learner recruitment and associated funding at the next Board meeting	The next Board meeting	EDFR
10.	15.2	The Chair invited governors to comment on the effectiveness of the Meeting via email to the Clerk.	The next Board meeting	Clerk

