

**Orchard Hill College Committee meeting
Tuesday 9th November 2021 at 4.00pm (Held virtually)**

- Present: David Hobday, Chair (DH)
Michele Humphreys, Vice-Chair (MH)
Kelly Phillips, Principal (KP)
Ric Adams (RA)
Akansha Arya (AA)
Neil Mears (NM)
- In attendance: Julie Stockdale (JS) (OHC Trustee)
Sue Curran (SC) Management Accountant
Tracey Goodsell (TG) (Clerk)
Kirsty Cottrell (KP) (Deputy Principal)
David Thomas (Deputy Principal)
Craig-Van-Der Veld (CV) (Regional Lead)
Mel Shepherd (MS) (Assistant Principal)
Charlotte Evans (CE)-Director of Operations
Helen Dixon-Potential Staff Governor-Observer

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Welcome and Introductions

DH welcomed Julie Stockdale (OHC Trustee), Charlotte Evans (OHC Director of Operations) and Helen Dixon (potential staff governor).

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations made. TG asked those governors that had not yet completed their annual Declaration of Interest form to do so and send it to her by email.

4. Skills Audit

TG asked those governors that had not yet completed their Skills Audit form to do so and send it to her by email.

5. Constitution and Appointments

i) Governors were asked to propose the appointment of the Chair of the Committee until autumn term 2022. DH had indicated that he was willing to stand again. Other nominations were invited and none were received.

Governors unanimously **AGREED** to recommend the appointment of DH as Chair of the OHC Committee until autumn term 2022.

DH thanked governors for their support. He added that he thought that it would be beneficial for a new Chair to be appointed after this academic year.

ii) Governors were asked to propose the appointment of the Vice Chair of the Committee until autumn term 2022. MH had indicated that she was willing to stand again. Other nominations were invited and none were received.

Governors unanimously **AGREED** to recommend the appointment of MH as Vice Chair of the OHC Committee until autumn term 2022. MH endorsed DH's comments regarding electing a new Vice Chair after this academic year.

Governors **NOTED** that these appointments would be ratified by the OHC Board at their next meeting.

iii) Governors **NOTED** that there is a vacancy for a staff governor. Helen Dixon has expressed an interest in this position and was observing this meeting before putting herself forward.

iv) Governors discussed the current composition of the governing body and agreed that the current membership is not reflective of the dispersed geography of the College sites. DH added that it is important that the governors, and particularly the Chair, are able to commit the appropriate amount of time to the role, which would include visiting all centres. KP agreed and said that there should be governors on the committee with the appropriate skills and experience in apprenticeships and AEB funding.

It was **AGREED** to seek more governors for the committee with suitable skills and time to commit to the role. TG said she could look to find appropriate governors via the national governor recruitment agencies. It was also agreed that the current governors should think of any people they know via their contacts who might want to join the committee. DH said he would put KP in touch with his Mencap contacts. TG also suggested that as Covid restrictions are eased, that portfolio holders could carry out their visit in other centres, other than those local to Sutton. HD said it would also be good to approach local employers and voluntary sectors.

6. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st June 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

7. Matters arising

Further to minute 5, the organisational chart for the College SLT had been circulated.

Further to minute 5, RA asked for an update on incidents at Wyvern. KP said that there have been significant difficulties at Wyvern. There was a focus on training staff during the half term break and improvements have been made. The Head of Learning Centre position has proved difficult to recruit to, and is now being covered by an agency member of staff. KP said she visits the centre once a week to maintain a leadership presence.

8. a) Principal's Report

1. Introduction

KP reported that since the easing of Covid restrictions, there has been improved attendance by students, but there have been new challenges around staff attendance, particularly where staff had not been double-vaccinated and therefore need to self-isolate if they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive.

Governors noted that the challenge around recruitment is a national problem. An action plan has been put in place to improve recruitment, but the lack of staffing is having a significant impact. JS asked whether the College is able to maintain stringent safeguarding measures if staffing is low. KP said this does depend on which staff are absent but if it is a key member of staff, this can be difficult. This means that alternative arrangements have to be made for the curriculum delivery, i.e. not taking students out in to the community.

Governors congratulated the College on the award from the AoC for the showstopper cake that students baked for the 'Love Our Colleges' week. They also congratulated the students who have been nominated for an award in memory of the Duke of Edinburgh to recognise their contributions to the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme during the pandemic.

Governors noted that they would receive an update on the recent training week (18-22 October) but that initial feedback was good.

2. Student Numbers

KP reported that High Needs student numbers are high. DH asked whether the college is able to accommodate them all. KP said a lot of them are Workstart students who will use the two new buildings in Robin Hood Lane and Camberwell Rd.

3. Teaching and Learning

Governors were pleased to note that Teaching and Learning is at least good across the College. DT said that a lot of work has been done around ensuring the students' needs and aspirations inform their destinations. This means that each student has a personalised curriculum which, whilst being challenging for teaching teams, is also exciting and engaging for both students and staff.

There has been a review of core skills, including developments in practice. i.e. assisted technology. Devices such as Alexa are cheap and widely available and help students to live independently.

DT took governors through the quality of teaching in each centre. He encouraged governors to visit the Sutton provision, particularly during drop-off time in the morning. Students are engaged from the minute they arrive at College and are ready to learn.

DH asked about observations, now that Covid restrictions have eased. DT said that observations have continued as previous to the pandemic but some good practice has been taken forward.

DT also spoke about the 'Deep Dive' process of observations, that mirrors Ofsted inspections. This means that managers will pick one student from each lecturer and review the whole provision of that student. This helps senior leaders to triangulate the evidence and allows for a more collaborative conversation with the lecturer.

RA asked how this method was received by the lecturers as it places greater scrutiny on them. KP said that whilst it is a more stressful process for lecturers, they recognise the need to ensure that the focus is to ensure that all students progress and achieve meaningful destinations which make a difference to their life. DT added that this is in line with the wider OHC&AT policy and staff often find it helpful to have a quantitative measure of their improvement. There is no extra work needed by lecturers as it is a review of their current system and processes.

4. Staff Development

Governors noted the information about the Diploma in Education and Training (DET).

MS spoke about the functional skills course in maths and English which is upskilling staff members in the College and the OHCAT schools. Numbers have increased to 33 and are mainly delivered virtually. Staff are given an additional allowance to do this work out of hours.

KP said that last year, a business case was made for an additional LSA level (level 2). A lot of current staff do not currently have a qualification. The College is not recruiting anymore LSAs unless they have a level 1 qualification. This will have an impact on recruitment but it is important to take on staff that are qualified at the right level.

KC informed governors that 4 staff (one in each region) have been enrolled to complete an advanced diploma qualification in trauma training. The course takes ten months to complete.

KC also said that there will be a review of the assessment process and how the College supports students with key celebrations. This will be looked at holistically over the next academic year.

5. Safeguarding

Governors noted that there has been an increase in student intervention plans due to an increased focus on training and workshops in this area.

Work is being carried out to produce a student accessible policy and procedure for Mental Health and Well-Being.

There has also been an increase in Children in need (CIN) referrals and meetings are attended by OHC to ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding. DH asked

about this increase and whether this is related to the Hillingdon provision. KC said that the SEMH profile there is younger students, many who have previously been in Alternative Provision. JS added that Covid restrictions over the last 18 months will also have an impact on referrals

6. Health and Safety

Governors noted that an audit of all reported incidents has recently been carried out and the Head of Health and Safety will be working with CE and KC to look at ways of capturing the data in a meaningful way for governors.

7. Estates

KP reported that negotiations are ongoing with regard to the Wyvern lease. Some of the refurbishment work has been carried out but there are ongoing problems.

The new reception at Nightingale Vocational Centre will be ready by Christmas and KP encouraged governors to visit.

KP said she is also trying to get common rooms in all centres.

With regard to Robin Hood Lane, KP said she is keen to eventually take over the whole building as there will be 21 students at VPC that will need to be relocated in July. She will start to have this conversation with LB Sutton.

Achieving for Children (AfC) in Kingston want a Post 16 campus for OHC, Dysart, Bedelsford and St Phillip's. This is an exciting proposal, but a suitable venue would need to be found as Beaconsfield is not fit for purpose.

8. HR

Governors noted the information in the Principal's report with regard to HR and the need to support staff through the next stage after the pandemic.

9. College Events

KP said that she would ensure that governors receive dates for Xmas events.

Governors **RECEIVED** the Principal's report.

b) Dashboards (Regional and Consolidated)

Governors **RECEIVED** the dashboards. Governors agreed that the data in the dashboards supports the narrative in the Principal's report. KP said she had worked with the MIS team to ensure that this document is meaningful and coherent to governors and asked for governors' comments on the new format. RA said he would like to see a comparison to previous years. It was also agreed that the financials included in this report could be removed as this is covered in the finance papers provided by Sue Curran, the management accountant.

Action: KP to provide this comparison for the next meeting and to ask the MIS team to remove the financial data.

5. Portfolio Visits

i) Finance and Resources

AA reported that she had met with SC. They had discussed the significant surplus and the spending deficit. The financial position of the College is strong and this is a good opportunity to think about how the surplus should be spent. Covid is still impacting in the budget i.e. reduction in staffing costs, Covid catch up grants and as we emerge from the pandemic, it would be good to look at other trends.

They had also discussed the challenges in recruiting therapists, with the recognition that this is a national issue. The College is looking at ways to continue to support with this, for example by increasing the marketing budget to help recruitment.

ii) Ethos, Vision and Strategy-DH

DH said much of what had been discussed in his portfolio meeting with KP had been covered in the Principal's report.

In addition, they had discussed a new 5- year strategy will come to this committee and the OHC Board in due course. They had also discussed a potential development opportunity for a new provision with Chelsea and Westminster College. A proposed new management structure will also be developed and brought to this committee and the OHC Board.

iii) Teaching and Learning-MH

MH said that DH had covered much of what had been included in her report. She endorsed the 'deep dive' approach that DT had discussed. MH said she had missed being able to visit centres during the last 18 months but she had attended the governors' conference which had been excellent. She said the day had been uplifting and positive and she thanked those who had been involved.

iv) HR and Organisational Development-RA

RA went through his report which had been circulated. There was a discussion about whether the dashboard could report on vacancies. CE said this would need to be inputted manually as there is not currently a template.

v) Safeguarding-NM

NM said that in addition to matters that had already been discussed in KP's report, he had discussed the senior leadership changes and retention of staff with KC. He added that the new competency test for LSA's will give value to the role and offers a pathway to Level 2. NM congratulated the College on receiving the Stage 2 Edupod

accreditation. He concluded by saying that staff have shown great resilience during the pandemic and passed on his thank to all staff and the leadership team.

Governors **RECEIVED** the portfolio reports.

6. Finance and Funding

i) Management Accounts to 31st July 2021

SC explained that these accounts are still subject to audit. She talked governors through the summary notes in the accounts and the commentary on the Income and Expenditure sheet.

Governors **RECEIVED** the management accounts to 31st July.21.

ii) Management Accounts-September 2021

SC talked governors through the summary notes in the accounts and the commentary on the Income and Expenditure sheet.

Governors **RECEIVED** the management accounts for September 2021.

7. Policies and Procedures

Governors noted the policies and procedures approved by the OHC&AT Board in the summer term.

8. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) September 2021

Governors noted that KCSIE has been updated with effect from September 2021 and the latest version is available to view on GovernorHub. Governors had received a presentation on the updates at the conference.

There was a discussion about the reporting of low level concerns and it was acknowledged, that, because of the complex needs of the students at OHC, any concern is reported. Peer on peer abuse is also complicated, as a high level of students display sexualised behaviour. There is already a category for this on the CPOMS system, and this will be broken down into sub-headings.

With regard to recruitment, it is now a legal requirement to get references from potential candidates before the interview stage. JS asked how induction training is managed and KP said that she has changed the process so that new staff only start in September, January and April to make it more manageable. Exceptional cases need to be signed off by KP first.

NM said he was confident in the College's recruitment systems and that there is a thorough induction programme. DH agreed but said it was important for governors to continue to support and challenge the leadership team in these areas

JS also asked whether any of the College centres are let to outside organisations but KP confirmed that this is not currently the case.

JS said that Ofsted will focus on contextualised safeguarding, and said it was important for the governing body to be aware of this. KP agreed and said that safeguarding issues vary from region to region i.e. domestic violence is more prevalent in the Sutton region whilst County Lines is the biggest safeguarding issues in Hillingdon.

Governors **RECEIVED** the updated KCSIE guidance and requested that KC delivers a training session on this at the next governors' meeting.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

The following dates were agreed and noted:

Tuesday 15th March 2022 at 4pm
Tuesday 14th June 2022 at 4pm
Tuesday 8th November 2022 at 4pm

10. Any Other Business

- i) NM also commented on the excellent governors' conference.
- ii) CE suggested that she could do an overview of the College's systems and process for governors' next time. This was agreed.

Action: TG to invite CE to the next meeting to give a presentation on the College's systems and processes.

- iii) DH suggested that, as much of the content of the portfolio reports were covered in the Principal's report, these documents could be combined into one report.

Action: TG to action for the next meeting

- iv) JS thanked governors for letting her attend the meeting which, as a trustee, had given her a useful insight at local level.
- v) KP said the draft Self-Assessment Report and case studies had been placed on GovernorHUB and she welcomed governors' comments.

The meeting closed at 6.00pm.

CHAIR: _____ **DATE:** _____